KASRIEL EATING, AND BESIDE HIM SAT A THIN LITTLE WOMAN.

# KASRIEL THE WATCHMAN

## And Other Stories

BY

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*This medley of childhood memories I dedicate to my mother.*

*The Author*

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# KASRIEL THE WATCHMAN

## HIS WONDERFUL SECRET

THE first time the "fellers" saw the night watchman who was to guard the building material for the new house on the block, they almost went wild with joy. Benjy, who was the uncrowned king of the block, looked him up and down with a professional air and declared that "there was going to be some fun, sure".

The new night watchman had a dirty-white beard, a pock-marked face and only one eye. In addition he dragged one foot so that Benjy added it would almost "be a shame to take the money".

The fun started as soon as the workmen were gone. The "fellers" over-ran the piles of lumber, overturned the barrels of lime and scattered the sand. The watchman limped about, waved his cane, stamped and shouted. Benjy, bolder than the rest, even managed to get right on to the foundation walls.

He saw the old man stoop and pick up

a large stone. Everyone got ready to "duck". But instead of throwing it, the watchman seemed to hesitate. Then Benjy saw the stone fall from his hand and a big tear start from his one eye and lose itself in his beard.

Something tight laid hold of Benjy's heart and he felt like punching his own face. He dashed over to the "fellers" and told them, to their great surprise, that "there aint gonna be no more fun with the old watchman".

"Why not?" asked Mugsy, the biggest of the lot.

"'Cause I say so!"

"I dunno about that. Who are you anyways?"

"Come on over and I'll show you!"

The other came and the fight was a battle royal. Benjy saw the old watchman look on and that seemed to give him more strength. It was no easy task, but at length his foe was conquered.

"Anybody else—would like to have—some fun—with the watchman?" asked Benjy, bruised and breathless.

There was no answer, and after a little

while the "fellers" dispersed. The old watchman stood still and stared after them a long while.

Later in the evening, after supper, Benjy had a strong desire to see the old watchman. Why had he not thrown the stone? What meant that tear? He must find the answer to those questions.

The watchman was sitting on a pile of lumber, and Benjy, without a word, sat down by his side. All around them the night was alive with the varied sounds of the street. Overhead, just stars and stars, millions of stars.

"My name is Benjy. What's your's?" This, of course, was asked in Yiddish.

"Kasriel," answered the watchman.

"Why did you cry when you picked up the stone?" Benjy asked this with a touch of wrath as he felt his bruises.

"I cried?"

"Yes, you did. I saw the tear come out of your eye. It fell in your beard."

Kasriel was silent. Then he said:

"She—she tells me I must never hurt little children."

"Who is she?"

"She—my old one—my wife."

Silence again. Benjy spied the flash of a falling star.

"Did you see the star come down?"

"Yes."

"Means someone died."

"Maybe. To us it is different. To us it means someone comes from heaven to the earth."

Benjy liked that. "Who told you that?" he asked.

"She—my old one. She says that is how the children came down."

"What children?"

"Our children. We had three."

Then after another silence, Benjy said: "Don't you feel awful lonesome being a watchman, Reb Kasriel?"

"Lonesome? No—not I."

"How is that? Don't you have to stay all alone all night?"

"Alone?" There was a queer note in Kasriel's voice. "Well, no—not all the time."

"How is that?"

"That is a secret."

"But I won't tell anybody."

"No, no. My old one always says to me I must not tell anybody."

"Well, ain't I your friend?"

"Yes, yes, you are my friend. But I promised her."

"Reb Kasriel," declared Benjy, earnestly, "You ain't treating me right." And in English he added: "Pals is pals."

Kasriel was in great distress. "I can lose my job," he said.

"All right," said Benjy, "but I ain't gonna tell you none of my secrets either."

It was a very hot night, and Benjy, together with most of the people of the tenement, went to sleep on the roof. Little by little the sounds of the street below died away.

Benjy lay down and slept for a time, but very badly. He still felt bruised. After several hours he woke up, and could not fall asleep again. He rose up, looked around at the odd scene formed by the outstretched sleepers and their many-colored bedding, then sat down on the cornice of the roof and looked down into the street.

Directly opposite gleamed the red lan-

terns which marked out the piles of building-material to the center of the street. Somewhere in the midst of that, he knew, Reb Kasriel must be sitting and watching. "What can be his secret?" Benjy asked himself.

At the corner of the deserted street Benjy suddenly spied a figure moving quickly towards the red lanterns. The figure stopped, looked around cautiously, then disappeared behind the piles of lumber.

Benjy was in a fever of curiosity. He quickly pulled on his shoes and breeches, tiptoed his way among the sleepers and gained the street.

On all fours he walked across the street as softly as a cat, peered cautiously among the piles, but could see nothing anywhere. He began to fear he would never discover Kasriel's secret.

But he found it at last. Behind a heap of window frames in a remote and cozy nook, he saw Kasriel seated on some beams and eating from a large dinner-pail between his knees. And beside him sat a thin little woman, her head covered

with a glossy wig, and her wrinkled little face gleaming as she watched him eat. Not a word was said by either of them.

Kasriel finished eating, the little woman took the pail and they continued to sit together in silence.

Benjy crouched behind the window frames and waited for something to happen. But nothing happened. The two sat beside each other as if unaware of each other's presence. They looked up at the sky, and several times an almost inaudible "Ah" escaped from the old woman. Benjy guessed she must have spied a falling star.

Benjy waited and waited until he grew tired. Then he crept back as softly as he had come, and left the old ones still sitting together on the plank.

He got back to the roof, sat down again on the cornice and made up his mind to wait until he could see the old woman go away.

He did wait a long time, but at last he got too sleepy. So he went back to his pillows and stretched out. And on Benjy's drowsy fancy there crowded pell-

mell memories and pictures from the Bible he was reading with his Rebbi: starry heavens glimmering on limitless deserts, and on the sand under the stars, now Abraham and Sarah, now Isaac and Rebekah, now Jacob and Rachel, all sturdy, white-bearded men and clinging little women; and now—is it possible? yes, no mistake!—there was Kasriel and his "old one" sitting exactly where Abraham and Sarah had sat only a minute ago!

"As faithful as the stars!" said a low whispering voice.

And wondering where he had heard that before—wasn't it in some "piece"? —Benjy fell asleep at last.

## HIS "WILD NATURE"

ONE evening Benjy saw that his "pal" Kasriel the Watchman, was very sad.

"Cheer up," said Benjy, "and tell a feller what's the matter." For after Benjy had discovered Kasriel's wonderful secret, namely: that his "old one" used to come and sit with him every night, the old watchman had no more secrets for his friend.

"My old one," answered Kasriel; "These damp nights are bad for her rheumatism."

"So she won't come to-night?"

Kasriel shook his head slowly.

"Cheer up!" cried Benjy, "I'll come and sit with you. I can sneak off the roof when everybody is sleeping. To-morrow is vacation, anyways, and I can sleep all day."

At a wee hour of the morning Benjy came and quietly sat down by the side of

Kasriel. The night was beautiful and hushed. Only now and then could be heard the distinct rumbling of an early vehicle. It was loud at first, then became fainter and fainter and at last was swallowed up in the hush of the night.

"Reb Kasriel", whispered Benjy: "What do you like better, the day or the night?"

"The night", answered the watchman. "By day I like to sleep."

"Oh? That's because you're a watchman!"

"Well,—no. I always liked the night better."

"But why?"

"I don't know. By night I feel at peace. My 'old one' says to me: 'By day all your wild nature comes out.' I have a wild nature, Benjy."

"Ah, g'wan!"

"Yes, yes. Sometimes I like to throw stones at the little loafers. I always had a wild nature, even when I was a boy, like you."

"What kind of things did you useta do?"

"Well," Kasriel thought a moment.—"I liked to climb trees, and sometimes I even used to sleep in a tree."

"That's a good one!" laughed Benjy, "You'd fall off!"

"Oh, no! I made myself snug in the branches.—But once I fell off, too."

"Jimminy! Did you get hurt?"

"My leg", said Kasriel; "And I still limp. But I'm glad I did it just the same."

"How can you be glad?"

"Wait till you hear the story, and you'll see.

"Do you know what is a village tailor in Russia?" Kasriel began. "No, it doesn't mean a tailor who lives in a village. It means a tailor who goes about from village to village and works for the peasants in their own homes.

"My father, Benjy, was such a village tailor. Every Sunday morning, and sometimes even on Saturday night, right after the Sabbath, he used to pack up into a bundle his shears and spools and other tools, as well as some bread and onions, and start out to look for work in the neighboring villages. Every Friday

afternoon he used to return, tired and covered with dust, and give my mother his earnings. It was a hard life and his earnings were only enough to keep us alive.

"When I was about your age, Benjy, my father took me along with him to the villages. 'It's time you stopped climbing on trees and on straight walls, and began to think of a living', he said to me. So he took me along and taught me to sew, and I used to help him carry his bundle. It was hard work but I liked it. Only I couldn't climb trees as much as I used to.

"Well, Benjy, one late afternoon—it was a Thursday, I remember—we were on our way home and wanted to get to a certain village for the night. We had had a good week and my father promised to buy me a pair of new shoes. My old ones were almost falling off my feet.

"In order to save time my father decided to take a short cut through a forest. Before entering the forest we were met by two young peasants.

"'Hey, Yankel!' said one of them,

'Where are you going?' My father told him.

"'I can hear the money jingle in your pockets,' said the peasant with a grin. 'Had a good week?'

"'God be thanked', said my father and we walked on.

"It was already night when we entered the forest, and after a good deal of walking my father realized he had lost his way. We were not frightened. The night was clear and warm, just like to-night, and we decided to sleep in the woods. We had done that several times before, and I used to like it very much. Ah, Benjy, what joy I had when I could spend the night in a forest!"

"I sleep on the roof every chance I get", said Benjy, but he couldn't help feeling that his brag was a poor one.

"But the trees, Benjy, the trees! Thousands of them all standing close together under the stars and praying to God! My father lay down and was soon asleep. But I couldn't sleep. My wild nature, I suppose, began to work in me. I felt as if I could climb to the

top of the forest and walk across it from one tree-top to the next. I got up and as quietly as a squirrel I climbed up into a tall tree near where my father was sleeping and made myself snug in the branches.

"All of a sudden I hear sounds of voices below me.

"'Out with the money, Yankel!' cried one voice, 'And hurry up!'

"'Have mercy on my wife and children!' I heard my father's voice, 'They will starve!'

"Then I heard sounds as of a struggle.

"'Hold him! Hold him tight!' cried another voice, 'I'll find it.'

"'Take my life, rather! Take my life!' shouted my father.

"Then I couldn't hear any more. Something rushed to my head and made me dizzy and deaf. It must have been my wild nature. I started up and jumped straight down from the tree.

"Jimminy!" Benjy cried, and gave a long whistle.

"As I fell I struck the shoulder of one of the thieves, and that, maybe saved

my life. The peasant—for it was the same one we had met earlier—gave a terrible shriek and fell to the ground. He was up immediately, and ran, shrieking, with all his might. The other was seized with the same panic and ran after the first. They must have thought that some wild beast had fallen upon them. As for me, I must have been out of my mind, for I got up and tried to run after them. But I felt a dull pain in my thigh and I fell down again. But the money was saved, and the thought that my mother would now 'have for the Sabbath', as she used to say, almost made me forget how much it hurt."

"Were you able to climb trees after that?" Benjy wanted to know.

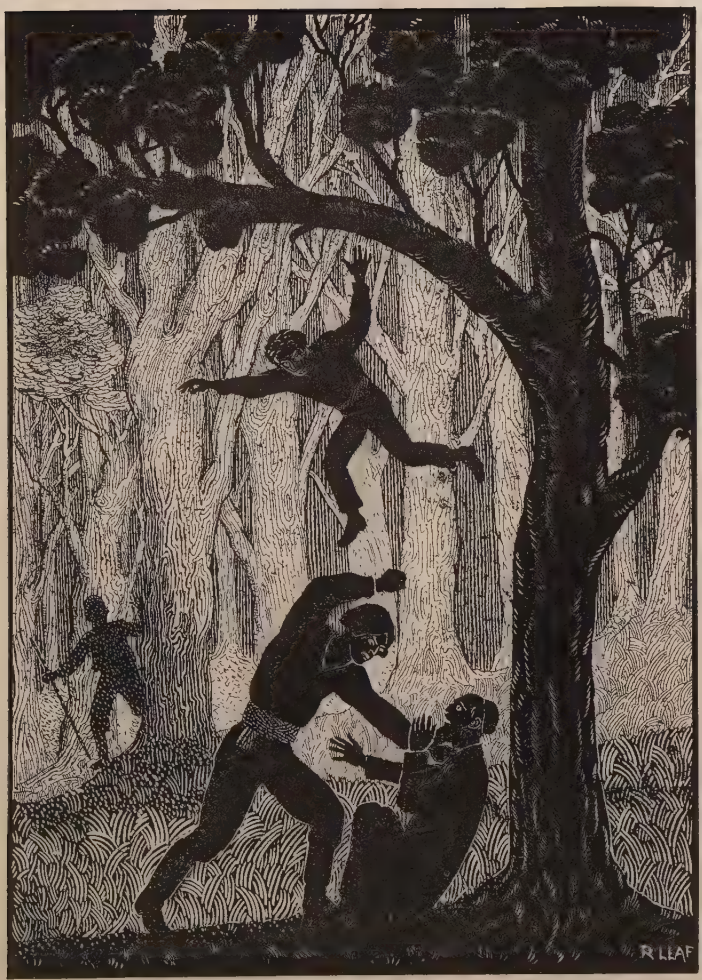
"Even on straight walls also, as my father used to say."

The two "pals" became silent again. The clatter of early vehicles was becoming more and more frequent. The street lamps were growing pale in the grayish-blue dawn.

"Reb Kasriel", sighed Benjy, "I'd like to be as wild as you, only there ain't no

more trees anywheres. The last one was on this lot, and they cut it down for the new building."

Then he rose and went back to his roof.




I STARTED UP AND JUMPED STRAIGHT DOWN FROM THE TREE

## HOW HE RESCUED HIS "OLD ONE"

MOVING softly as a cat, Benjy zig-zagged on tiptoes through the sleepers on the roof, and for the second night went down to sit with his pal, Kasriel, the Watchman. For Kasriel's "old one" was still down with the rheumatism, and Benjy was glad enough to take her place. He was proud to have a share in their wonderful secret, not to speak of the stories Kasriel could tell him.

The night was overcast and only now and then could the gleam of a star be seen through the driving clouds.

For almost ten minutes Benjy sat silent beside his "pal", just like Kasriel's "old one", the night he surprised their great secret.

"Reb Kasriel," said Benjy at last, "Why don't you tell me a story about your 'old one'? Has she got a wild nature like you?"

"No," said Kasriel. "Her nature is

peaceful and smooth like a deep river."

"Then tell me why she took you."

"Because I saved her."

"She was drowning in the river?"

"No, worse than that."

"You saved her from a fire?"

"Worse than that."

"Ah, g'wan, there ain't nothin' worse than that!"

"I saved her from the hands of her enemies. It's a long story, but I'll make it short."

"Do you know what is a 'Ba'al Agolo,' Benjy? No, not just a driver, but one who has his own horse and wagon and takes people from one town to another. When I was a young man I was a 'Ba'al Agolo.' I always liked horses. I like all animals."

"Me, too," put in Benjy. "Only I can't stand cats. There are too many around here."

"I had a fine horse," continued Kasriel, "a brown one, with a small pretty head, and a neck like a lion's. And I loved to be on the road with him all day long. That horse, Benjy, was as smart as a

man, and I loved him like a brother. And how he could go!"

"Must have been a fire-horse," Benjy explained.

"Well, in one of the villages that I often used to pass—Popovka it was called—there was a Jewish inn-keeper named Sender. Reb Sender was the only Jew in the village and lived in the inn with his only daughter, Malke. His wife was dead. The daughter used to help the father in the business.

"'She's a beauty,' the peasants used to say, 'And as quiet as a dove. What a pity she is not of the 'True Orthodox Faith.'

"That, of course, meant their own faith. Every other they considered false.

"I began to notice one day that Stenka, the son of the squire of the neighboring village, got to be a frequent guest at Sender's inn. This Stenka, whose father was a rich landowner, had the reputation of being a lazy good-for-nothing.

"I noticed also that Malke used to be afraid of Stenka, and that he always

tried to be near her and attract her attention.

"I spoke about it one day to Reb Sender.

"'It's nothing,' said he. 'Just a jolly young man, and a very good customer.'

"Not long afterwards I also began to notice, as I made my way through the villages, that Stenka was very often in the company of his village priest. Knowing that Stenka had no inclinations for religion, I thought that sudden friendship very queer. About that time, also, a story was being told of a Jewish girl who had been stolen from her parents and forced to change her religion. And I don't know why, but every time I saw Stenka and the priest together, that story came to my head.

"One day I stopped at Sender's inn and on entering I came upon a loud scene. Malke was standing in a corner and weeping and Sender was shouting to Stenka to leave the inn and never come back. Stenka was shouting back and laughing at him.

"I moved forward toward Stenka. He

made for the door, shouting and threatening."

"He was afraid of you?" asked Benjy.

"Well, you see, he had his reputation and I had mine."

"On account of your wild nature?"

"Yes, and on account of the great strength I had in my arms. Ah, in those days.....

"Well, to make my story short, a few days after the quarrel in the inn I was returning home late one afternoon, and as I passed the house of the priest I saw him standing near the road with Stenka and two peasants. The latter I had never seen before, and I didn't like their faces.

"The priest motioned me to stop and I reined in my horse.

"'Kasrilka,' said the priest to me, 'I want to hire your horse and wagon for to-night. You will get them back to-morrow morning.' And with that he took out a red bank-note and offered it to me.

"'Who will drive my horse?' I asked, for I wanted to be sure my horse would be treated right.

"'These men,' answered the priest. 'And you can hold me responsible if anything happens.'

"I took the money, left my horse and wagon behind, and set out on foot to the town where I lived and which was only a few miles distant. But on the way my mind began to fill with all kinds of suspicions and fears. The red banknote was burning in my hand.

"I arrived home and tried to go about as usual, but my fears became stronger. Finally, after vainly trying to fall asleep I could bear it no longer. I got up, dressed myself hastily, and went out in search of my horse and wagon.

"It must have been midnight or perhaps later when I reached the house of the priest. Everything was dark and quiet. I went on and took the road to Popovka. Just why I took that road I don't know, but my heart led me right.

"Suddenly, I heard the sound of fast wheels, and in the darkness ahead I saw something moving towards the village I had just left. I stopped at a little copse by the side of the road and waited.

The vehicle was coming along at a fast pace and soon I recognized it as my own.

"I ran forward into the middle of the road.

"'Tprrrr!" I shouted, which, you know, Benjy, is the Russian way of telling a horse to halt.

"Instantly my good little horse, who recognized my voice, braced up in his traces, and the wagon stopped with a loud creak.

"'Get out of the road!' shouted a gruff voice.

"'Whyo! Git up!' shouted another. But my horse did not budge. Ah, he was wise, that little horse! I loved him like a brother.

"Then they began to whip him. I heard the whip crack on his back. The blood in me rushed to my head,

"'Stop whipping my horse!' I shouted and ran forward to the box.

"Crack! Right across my face and eye came the whip! This same eye, Benjy, has since closed altogether.

"Well, after that I was no longer myself. I became just a wild, crazy

animal. I pulled those peasants off the box—there were only two after all—and I struck at them with all my strength and fury.

"Well, Benjy, to make my story short, after I was through with the peasants, I jumped to the reins and drove right to—where do you suppose?—Reb Sender's inn! My heart led me right.

"I found Reb Sender tied to his bed with a gag in his mouth. After freeing him we both went down and found Malke—where do you suppose?—in the wagon under the hood, tied and gagged as her father had been. Of course, she was being taken to the priest.

"That same night the three of us packed into the wagon Reb Sender's most valuable possessions, and we drove more than twenty miles to a town where he had friends and relatives. He would not stay in his inn another hour, and a month or so later he sold it."

"And Malke married you and now she is your old one," said Benjy. "That's the only way. If you save a girl, she's

got to marry you, and you live happily ever afterwards."

And with that Benjy rose and returned to his roof.

## HIS MAGIC WITH BABIES

THE day had been broiling hot, and the night too, was stifling. Around the piercing lamp-lights hung a hot haze,—the panting breath of the night. Only above, the stars were cool and serene.

Benjy was sitting with his "pal", Kasriel the Watchman, and listening to the sounds of the night. From a tenement near by came the loud frantic crying of a baby.

"Do you like babies, Reb Kasriel," Benjy asked. "I hate 'em."

"Shshhhh! What a sin! In this world babies are the most beautiful blessing God sends. Only, sometimes He takes them away," he added as if to himself.

"But they cry!" Benjy complained. "Just listen to that one! Why don't it shut up? An' when they start in they don't stop. Last week I had to mind my baby brother and he began to cry. I

didn't know what to do. I tell him to shut up. No good! I dance,—no good! I do the handstand,—no good! Then I slapped 'im, but that didn't do any good either."

"Babies never cry with me, Benjy."

"What do you do?"

"Nothing. I just take them in my arms and they stop. I don't know why, myself. My 'old one' says I have some magic with the babies."

"Magic?"

"My 'old one' believes in that. Well, she is only a woman... But once it so happened that were it not for this magic a party of people who were going to America would have been arrested and sent back to Russia."

Benjy made himself snug to listen.

"We had to steal the border, Benjy, that's how it was. You don't know what it means to steal the border? When people want to leave Russia, they sometimes get a passport, which costs a lot of time and money, or else they steal across the border in one way or another, usually at night.

"We were a party of some ten or twelve emigrants, men for the most part and two or three women, one of whom had a baby of about twenty months. He was a jolly little fellow with red hair and big brown eyes. Like all babies he took a liking to me as soon as we met.

"Our party, when it reached a certain town, was put in charge of a man whom we called the agent. At night he came for us, packed us all into a big wagon, drove us to another town, and left us in the house of a friend of his. We were told that the whole of the next day we would have to remain hidden in the barn near the house and that on the following night the great event would take place. That night we would steal the border.

"Though we slept most of the day in the barn, we were very anxious for the night to come. I have never been much of a sleeper, so I had plenty of time to play with Pinchasel, as the baby was called.

"Night came at last, a pitch-black night without moon or stars; just the night we wanted. The same wagon drew

up at the barn and we all got in again. The agent told us we must do exactly as he commanded and, above all, he warned us to be as silent as the grave.

"'A baby!' he exclaimed with vexation, holding up his lamp over the mother and the baby, whom he seemed to notice for the first time.

"'My baby!' said the woman, drawing it close to her, as though afraid some one meant to steal it from her.

"'Be very careful,' said the agent. 'Mustn't let it cry.'

"We rode on the wagon about half an hour and then got out again. Everything about us was as black as pitch.

"'Now,' whispered the agent, 'we are right on the border. Follow me, walk as fast as you can, and keep close together. And, remember, as silent as the grave.'

"We started off. After a while all we could hear was one another's quick breathing.

"Suddenly, a long shrill baby's cry rang out right in our midst. We stopped, paralyzed with terror. And almost

the same moment, the report of a rifle shot rang out from somewhere to the right, and a bullet came screeching over our heads.

"'Down, down!' whispered the agent hoarsely, 'and gag that baby, quick!'

"But Pinchasel went right on screaming at the top of his voice. The mother pressed his face to her bosom with all her strength, but the cries still rose up, muffled and frantic.

"I jostled my way through the group, felt for the baby, grasped it and spoke to it. Instantly, and as though by magic as my 'old one' would say, the baby became silent.

"In the meantime, however, the shooting continued, and the bullets went on whistling over us. And even after the baby became silent the shooting did not cease. To get up and continue our flight was out of the question. With such a large party some one of us would be sure to get hit.

"What was to be done? I racked my head as I lay on the ground holding the panting little body in my arms. I re-

alized that if we stayed there much longer the soldiers would come upon us. For they knew where we were,—they knew we would not dare to go on in face of the shooting.

"Then like a flash I thought of what to do. It must have been God Himself who put the idea into my head. I waited until a bullet screamed past, then I whispered to the others to wait for me, and I stood up with the baby in my arm and ran as fast as I could directly to the right. I held Pinchasel in my arms, and whispered to him as I ran. He coddled close to me and stuck his little nose into my beard.

"When I judged that I had run about a hundred yards, I stopped, laid Pinchasel on the ground and bent over him.

"'Good-bye, Pinchasel,' I whispered to him, 'I am going away.'

"Instantly, and just as I had expected, the baby let loose a great yell. I immediately lay down beside him and waited. A bullet screeched over me, followed fast by another and another.

"So far, then, my ruse was successful.

But now it was necessary to get back to the others. The dangers were great, as you can well imagine. Bullets, in the first place; and then, the chance of losing my way. But I always had a sharp sense of direction, and that night God was with me. For about fifteen yards I crawled along with Pinchasel, as silent as a mouse, on my back. Then I got up and ran. When I reached the others the shooting was still going on, but the bullets were no longer flying over us. We knew we could now proceed safely, and lost no time in starting.

"And for the rest of the way, Benjy, until we reached the other side of the border and were received by another friend of the agent's, I carried Pinchasel in my arms."

"Reb Kasriel," said Benjy, "around here you could make more money keeping the babies quiet than being a watchman. One of these nights I'll bring you my little brother."

And Benjy rose and returned to his roof.

## HIS PASSION FOR BUILDING

THE two "pals," little Benjy and old Kasriel the Watchman, were sitting together late one night, when they heard soft steps moving about among the piles of building material.

"It's a thief!" whispered Benjy.

"Shshhhh!" said Kasriel, grasping a thick stick which lay near him. But a moment later he sat down again.

"It's my 'old one'," he said with a soft chuckle. And sure enough there soon appeared a thin little woman with a glossy wig who sat down beside Kasriel.

"I felt better," she said, "and I couldn't stay away any longer."

And the wonderful secret of Kasriel and his "old one," their joint night watches began again.

That night Benjy, who, as a real "pal," enjoyed full confidence, learned that they possessed another great secret! Kasriel and his "old one" were planning and

saving to end their days in the Land of Israel!

"But ain't this the best country in the world?" Benjy protested.

"It is," Kasriel assented. "But—," and he hesitated.

"But he wants to live in his own house," Malke concluded for him.

"My uncle," stated Benjy, "bought four lots for fifty dollars. He could have four houses, only the lots are too far from his candy store."

"But Kasriel," said Malke, "made a vow."

"A vow?"

"Yes, Benjy. I swore an oath never to build myself a house any more except in the Land of Israel. It's a long story—"

"Start 'er off," said Benjy, as he settled back to listen.

"I always loved to build, Benjy," Kasriel began. "When I was a boy I used to catch it many a time from my father for spending whole days looking on where building was being done. When I was older I worked at the building trades, and

my dearest hope was to build a house for myself some day and live in it. Building used to draw me like a magnet."

"Maybe that's why you are now a watchman," Benjy suggested.

"Sure!" answered Kasriel's 'old one.' "He could have better jobs and sleep by night, but, no! He must have buildings!"

"Well, Benjy, after many years I did build my own house, and not one but several. The first one was a mere hut with a straw roof and only one window. I loved it because it was the work of my own hands, but after a while I wanted a bigger and better one. So I moved to another village and built one with a gable and a little porch and two rooms and three windows. In that house we lived in joy and sorrow for many years. But the children came and God was good to me and I began to think of a still bigger and finer house. The building fever must have come over me, for I felt that I must build myself a new house.

"So we moved to the village of Pinenka, which is the prettiest village in all those parts. And I chose a pretty site

overlooking the river, and bought the land from a peasant, and there I built my house. I built it with the thought of living there the rest of my days. I planned the rooms large with many windows. I made a long broad porch in the front and a smaller one in the back, a floor of hard polished wood, two gables and a garret, and a roof of bright green shingles. And every beam and board and shingle, every trowel of plaster I laid with my own hands. I was never so happy as when I was building that house. It took long but we went to live in it before it was quite finished... And later I added a barn and a stable for my horses and another for the cow, and a little chicken-coop and a pigeon-house, and—"

"And when there was nothing new to make," Malke interrupted, "he began to make alterations. He always had to be building."

"And I kept on improving it up to the very end—until—" Kasriel stopped.

"Well?" Benjy demanded.

"Tell him, Malke—you," said Kasriel.

"We had to leave the village, Benjy," said Malke. "We had no right to live there."

"No right to live there? Why not?"

"Because we were Jews."

"Jimminy!" Benjy swore. "They had the nerve?"

"At that time," said Kasriel, "they began with their May Laws, and the Jews had to leave the villages."

"I remember it like to-day," said Malke, "how you came home with the news, and you were like a crazy man. You ran about the house, from the garret to the cellar, to the barn and stables, then back to the house. That day, Benjy, I was sure he was out of his mind.

"'We'll sell the house,' said I to him, 'and with God's help we'll build another one in the town.'

"'Sell the house? Sell the house?' he repeated, and looked as if he didn't know what that meant. Then he became calmer and sat down and seemed lost in thought. After a while he rose up and went out. Ah, if I had only known then what was in his mind!

"There was no time to lose, Benjy, so we began to get ready at once. 'Have you found a customer for the house?' I asked him several days later. And he answered angrily: 'Leave that to me.' So I said no more about it. Ah, if I had only known!

"The day came when we had to go. All that day my eyes were not dry for a moment. Wherever I turned and wherever I looked I found fresh cause for tears. And he, Kasriel, says to me: 'Why do you cry, little fool? Will it help you any?'

"At last all our belongings were heaped up on two wagons, the cow was tied to the back-post of the second, and, with a last look behind, we drove off.

"We followed the winding road to the town, and in about an hour we came to the top of a hill from which we could see the village of Pinenka below. I looked down and my heart stopped beating from terror.

"Our house and the barn and the stables were just one mass of smoke and flames! The air was clear and crisp, and

the smoke and flames shot straight up into the sky. I could even make out some of the village people running about. But it was easy to see that the house could not be saved.

"'Kasriel!' I screamed, 'Our house is burning!'

"I looked at him and—God mine! I forgot even the burning house. He was so changed I couldn't recognize him, and he paced up and down like a wild beast in a cage. Then he took out a little knife from his pocket and made a cut in his coat as is done for the dead. 'Blessed be the righteous Judge!' he repeated again and again.... Then he sat down on the earth and buried his head between his knees and sobbed. And as I looked at him, the truth flashed into my head.

"I came close to him and bent down and said:

"'Kasriel, why did you do it?'

"And he answered:

"'I couldn't, Malke, I couldn't sell it.'

"Then he became calm again and got up and made his vow:

"'May my right hand wither,' he said, "if I ever build me a house again in the Golus; but if God grant me days and strength, I will yet build me a house in the Land of Israel.'"

Kasriel's "old one" became silent, and little Benjy, moved by a multitude of feelings, remained seated with the old couple in the silence of the night for a little while longer.

Then he rose up quietly and left them to themselves, wrapped in their bitter-sweet memories and lulled by their great dream.

# PERL THE PEANUT-WOMAN

## THOSE DAYS AND THESE

"PEANOTCH! *Goldene* peanotch! Buy, kinderlach, two bags a penny! Such a year on me!"

Seated on a low soap-box near her open sack, Perl the Peanut-Woman was like a figure taken from the picture of an Oriental bazaar. The red bandanna kerchief on her head gave a deeper shade of brown to her tanned and wrinkled face; and her red waist and green skirt made her stand out brilliantly against the dull background of gray pavement and dirty tenement, even as her loud, mannish voice rose above the confused din of the street.

But her voice became gradually weaker, for the noon-hour heat was pouring down, and under the torrid shower, Perl's head began to bend drowsily, though her lips continued to mumble lazily her everlasting chant. Her usual customers, —the newsboys, the expressman station-

ed on the corner, the unemployed in the little park, had already bought their peanuts; Perl was left undisturbed, warmed by the hot caressing light and lulled by the hum of the life about her. Her thoughts floated away, far, far away, to another land, another age, to the scenes of her splendor, of her great and arduous past.

And, as always in her musings, the figure of him, her great scholar, her *Talmid-Chochem*, the husband she used to support in the study of the Law, appeared and reigned over her reveries like a monarch,—he, peace unto him, the placid scholar, he by whose devotion and grace she had earned her portion of Paradise, he who used to call her his *Aishes-Chayil* his Woman of Valor! Those were the days when she was truly a Valiant Woman, toiling day and night, buying and selling, hauling and carting, keeping want away from her door, feeding the children and him, her ornament and bringer of grace.

And now! How was she fallen! He,

her chief glory, gathered to his fathers, be his memory for a blessing; her children scattered and estranged; and she herself cast away upon a strange land and in her old age doomed to toil in the heats of summer and the frosts of winter. He, who surely must be looking down on her from the gates of Eden, was he satisfied to see her at her peanut-sack? Would it not be better for her if she joined him? And, in truth, was it not time? No more, she was no more a Woman of Valor! Surely a mortal can not keep his strength forever! Rheumatism, pains in the back, short breath,—God was not forgetting her! But in those days, ah! those days, she was strong like a lion, could lift the heaviest weights, laughed at the heat and the frost and the snow and the rain! Those days...She remembered how one Friday she was returning to town with a cartload of eggs and poultry she had bought in the neighboring village. Not far from the town, swank! the horse stumbles and snaps his foreleg below the knee! Was she dismayed? At once she unharnessed the

horse, tied him to a tree, took hold of the shafts.——

Perl the Peanut-Woman looked up with a jerk. Her revery was snapped off with the suddenness of a clap of thunder. Issuing from the little Park opposite, a loud wailing and shouting reached her ears. She realized that something unusual was taking place.

She shook her dreams and memories off her back, as it were, and, standing up, shielded her eyes with her large horny hand, and tried to make out what was taking place in the Park. But a crowd had gathered around the scene and hid it from sight. Only the wailing and shouting continued to be heard.

Perl swung her sack on her back, took up her soap-box and made straight for the scene of disturbance. The crowd made way for the soap-box and sack, and Perl was soon able to see the cause of the commotion.

In the center of the crowd stood Jakie the news-boy. He was wailing loud and wriggling hard, for he was being held by the collar, and he who held him was

the keeper of the Park, he whom Perl called the *Paskudnik*, a term of contempt whose meaning the keeper could only surmise. For he and Perl were enemies, his hostility having its origin in the peanut shells which he had to sweep up and for which he held Perl responsible.

"I wasn't sellin' no papers in the Park," wailed Jakie, "I was only passin' through!"

"Shut up your head", rejoined the keeper, "You ain't gonna fool me this time. I'm gonna see you off to the station-house before I let you go!"

Perl understood the word "station-house", and, besides, the entire scene spoke for itself. She set down her box and sack, folded her arms and faced the keeper.

"Arrest him!" she cried, "*Paskudnik ainer*!" And then she uttered a long monologue in Yiddish, addressed to the keeper and in part also to the audience, the gist of which was that Jakie was an orphan, and did it hurt the *Paskudnik* that Jakie sold a few papers in the Park? And the keeper didn't merit the favor the Earth was doing him by letting him rest

on it, that he was an "Enemy of Israel", was destined to die the death of a mad dog, and so on, and so forth.

Now the keeper who understood not a word of Perl's speech but knew only himself to be its object, tightened his hold on Jakie's collar and considered that the best way to answer his foe was to laugh in her face, which he accordingly did.

But his laughing had a strange effect on Perl. People in the crowd were unable to explain exactly what happened. But all, even those on the outskirts, heard several ringing sounds, and those near the center saw the keeper reel away from Jakie, and both his cheeks suddenly turn as red as fire. Jakie lost not a second. He dashed through the legs of the crowd and disappeared.

There were different explanations of why the Czar of the Park let things rest where Perl had left them. Some said it was because in America it is "Ladies first", and that a man has no right to strike a lady. Others, not so enthusiastic about American chivalry, claimed

it was because the keeper saw that the crowd was against him.

As for Perl herself, as soon as she saw that Jakie had safely vanished, she directed one last scowl at the vanquished Czar, took up her sack and soap-box and returned to her former station.

"Peanotch!" she cried, "*Goldene* peanotch, such a year on me! Buy, kinderlach, two bags a penny!"

And for a little time, owing to her sudden notoriety, the customers came and went. But soon Perl found herself again alone, and as before, under the drowsy spell of the heat, her lips moved mechanically, her head drooped, and the misty world of her past came back and lulled her with its bitter-sweet memories. Those days! When he, be his memory for a blessing, called her his *Aishes Chayil*, his Woman of Valor! How she used to rejoice that it was her privilege to provide for him so he could spend his days in devotion and the study of the Law! And nothing used to daunt her! Yes, that cart! When the horse stumbled and broke a leg, did she not take hold

of the shafts and drag the cart to town herself!

And thus, her wrinkled eye-lids drooping, her trembling chin sunk into her red shirt-waist, her lips still mumbling her chant, sat Perl the Peanut Woman and dwelt on those great days when he, peace unto him, called her his "Woman of Valor".

## A MANNA SABBATH MEAL

ON FRIDAY night, when, after the lighting and blessing of the candles, Perl the Peanut-Woman sits down in the new-cleaned parlor of the house where she boards and waits for the return of the men-folks from synagogue, her appearance is so changed that she might be taken for a different woman. The red bandanna kerchief has made way for a bright black wig; in place of the red waist and green skirt she has put on a glossy brown dress; but above all, her face seems to have grown fresher, smoother, younger. The other women-folk sit in the parlor with her, the children crowd and chatter around her. That hour between the completion of the Sabbath preparations and the home-coming of the men from synagogue has such wonderful power and peace that it alone seems sufficient to bring rest from all the fatigues of the week's labors.

That hour, especially, brings to Perl hosts of memories of her toilsome past, memories made holy by the figure of him, her pious and learned husband whom she used to maintain in the study of the Law. A stranger in a strange house and strange land, she nevertheless loves to beguile herself by making all the Sabbath preparations every Friday, and waiting expectantly for the men to come back from synagogue, just as though her own would be among them.

To the children of the house and of the neighbors she has deeply endeared herself, and they come and make her tell stories of her past glory. Without knowing it, she often tells them the same ones over again, but they all listen with attentive faces and make believe it is all new and wonderful. And if any there are inclined to smile secretly or openly, little Jakie the newsboy threatens heavy punishment. For Jakie is Perl's most ardent friend, and often plays hooky from synagogue in order to sit with her.

"The 'apikorsim', the unbelievers, these days, make fun of everything", says Perl,

"but that is because mine, peace unto him, is no longer living. In his day he did things which would make them stop laughing fast enough."

Then all the children know they may expect a story of the wonderful powers of "hers", peace unto him.

"I am an ignorant woman," begins Perl; "but he, mine, taught me one chapter in the Scriptures, the one you will hear the men say when they return in a little while. It begins like this: 'A woman of valor who can find her? For her price is far above rubies.' That chapter he made me learn because, he used to say, the great King Solomon had written it in my honor! And on Friday nights when he returned from synagogue and sang that chapter after his Sabbath greeting, he kept looking at me all the time, and my heart melted with happiness and pride.

"But, one Friday night—do you hear, *kinderlach*?—instead of pleasure I felt only pain and shame. What the trouble was? The trouble was a very great trouble. There was nothing to eat. I

had worked and slaved like a horse that week, but the peasants had asked unheard-of prices, the mistresses refused to buy, competition was plentiful, and even old debts I was unable to collect. So all I could prepare for that Sabbath was some white bread and a soup seasoned with a piece of fat I had gotten from one of the cooks. You can imagine what kind of soup it must have been! Very bad, no? Well, just wait and see.

"Mine, peace unto him, enters with his Sabbath greetings as usual and begins the 'Woman of Valor,' walking up and down and stopping often to look at me and smile. I sat like a stone and would have liked the earth to open under me and swallow me. Mind you, I understood everything he was saying in the Holy Tongue. Finally, when he came to the verse 'She is like the merchant-ships; she bringeth her food from afar', I could bear it no longer. The shame came up to my very heart and I began to cry bitterly.

"He, my Talmid-Chochem,—be the memory of the righteous for a blessing—just looked at me once—no more—and he

knew everything at once. But he went right on and finished the 'Woman of Valor' right up to the end, just as though I deserved all the praise that was in it. But something there came into his face, I noticed, as if an angel from God had touched it. And I felt in my heart that something great, some miracle, was going to happen.

"He made *Kiddush* over the two white loaves, and when he tasted the first morsel his face just beamed with wonder.

"'A taste like Paradise!' he said and smacked his lips. I took some after him, and I couldn't understand how the white bread, which I had made without even one egg, could taste like the best egg-cake I had ever eaten.

"'Perele,' says he to me again, 'to-night you will stay in your seat and I will do the serving.'

"Of course, I was going to protest, but, as I said before, he looked so strange, so serious, that I obeyed without a word.

"Then he takes one of the loaves, cuts off two slices, puts them into plates, keeps

one for himself, gives me the other, and says:

"'Fish! Gefillte fish!'

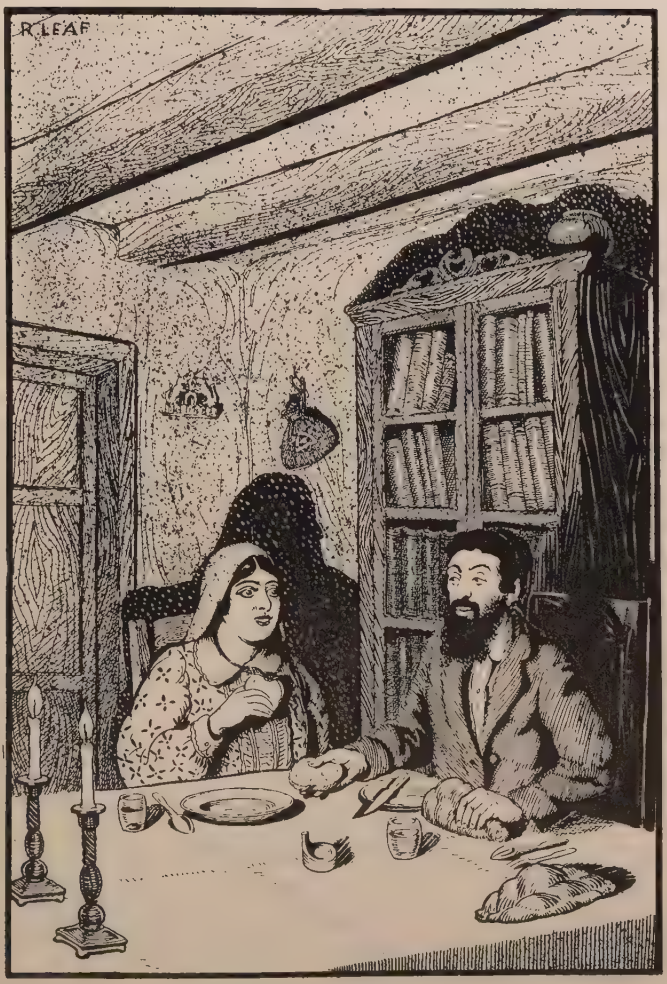
"Ah, you are laughing? Laugh, laugh! You wouldn't have laughed if you had tasted it. To tell you it tasted like fish is nothing! It tasted like the best fish that was ever cooked!

"Mine, may his favor shield us, was no more the same man. I looked at him and I had to turn away my eyes. His face was shining. The Presence itself seemed to be resting on it.

"After fish comes meat. He cut off two more slices of white bread and says: 'Meat, chicken meat.'

"You can laugh as much as you like. But it had the taste of real chicken. Mine tasted like the drumstick. After the meat he served the soup I had made,—and what was that I said before about the soup? Never mind, but that soup was no soup; it was the richest and sweetest broth ever set on table. The taste of it is even now in my mouth.

"He filled the plates again—I had made




"A TASTE LIKE PARADISE," HE SAID, AND SMACKED HIS LIPS.

plenty of it—and took some of the white bread and broke it into the soup.

"'*Tzimmes*,' says he. 'Turnip *tzimmes*!'

"Well, you think it's a joke, hey? But the *tzimmes* was like all the things that came before. It was sweet and well-seasoned and of the freshest turnips.

"That night, kinderlach, I was in such a state that I did not dare ask him any questions. And for weeks afterwards I felt too great an awe to speak to him about the wonders he brought about that Friday night. But there came a time when he explained it all to me. And now I shall see how you will laugh!

"Do you know, my wise ones, what the children of Israel ate in the desert? Manna, no? Well, and do you know what the taste of the manna was? Yes, it was like wafers made with honey, as the Holy Book tells us. But it was more, and you can ask any scholar about it. *The taste of the Manna was like the taste of any kind of food that the one who ate it was longing for.* There! Now will you laugh? Could not he, my Talmid-

Chochem, bring to pass what any one of the Children of Israel could bring to pass in the desert?"

And the face of Perl the Peanut-Woman beams upon her audience with triumph and exultation.

# TEMPTATION

IN HER red bandanna kerchief, green waist, and red shirt, Perl the Peanut-Woman, sitting on her soap-box by the wide-open peanut sack, is the most vivid sight on the street. And her brown wrinkled face with the stern lines at the rugged mouth and deep fearless eyes complete her resemblance to a desert queen at an Oriental bazaar, and bring to your mind recollections and fancies from the Arabian Nights. It is no wonder, therefore, that a big sight-seeing auto, one of those vehicles that take people from another world to view the "curiosities of the East Side," stopped one day not far from Perl, and a man and a woman, both richly dressed, he with the Van Dyke beard of an artist, descended to look at the peanut-woman more closely.

"Like a figure from Goya", said the man to his companion.

"The very model for your 'Turkish Bazaar' ", replied she.

Seeing the two approach, Perl held up to them several little bags and assured them they were "goldene peanotch."

The artist took the bags and threw a silver coin into the sack. Perl plunged her hand into the deep pocket at her side for the change.

"Keep the change, keep it!" said the stranger.

"Vat?" said Perl, but Jakie the newsboy had just run up, attracted by the unusual scene, and he explained to Perl what the "gentleman" meant.

Perl was amazed but she promptly recovered herself.

"Tell him", said she to Jakie, "I don't live out of charity."

The artist, in his turn, was somewhat surprised, but he solved the difficulty by buying numerous little bags of peanuts and handing them around to the children who had ranged themselves around him and Perl. Older people, too, were attracted by the strange sight, and in a

short time there was quite a little crowd witnessing the event.

The artist took out a little white card and gave it to Perl.

"Tell her", he turned to Jakie, "I want her to come and sit for me in my studio, just as she is now. I'll put her into a picture and pay her a good price for her time. A good price, do you hear? And you can come with her so she won't get lost. Good-bye, Grandmother", he concluded, touching Perl's shoulder with a grand air.

Then he gracefully took his companion's arm and the two returned to their seats in the auto.

"Fortunately", said he to her, "she'll be lured by the 'good price'. Otherwise it would be impossible to make her come."

"Yes", replied his companion languidly, as the big machine rumbled away, "That's how they tell me these people are."

Jakie the newsboy was in a transport of joy and general excitement. He repeated to Perl what the "gentleman" had said, and, because he secretly loved to read Alger, he assured Perl that

"her fortune was made", because "That's always the way it's in the books".

Perl gaped at Jakie and at the rest of the crowd and did her best to understand what it was all about.

"Jakele", said she finally, "My head is unable to take it in. Fortune, smortune, I don't know what you are chopping there. To-night, Jakele, you'll come to me and we'll talk about it. Now there is no time." And she turned to the crowd and shouted:

"Peanotch! Goldene peanotch! Buy, two bags a penny!"

"Fortune knocks at her door", said one of the crowd, "and she is worrying about her peanuts."

"Give a pig noodles", said Getzel Shmektabak, who disliked Perl because he himself sold peanuts on the opposite corner.

"May God give you a fever in a little pot", retorted Perl, as she kept handing out the little bags and taking in the pennies.

But soon Jim the policeman came along, and after dispersing the crowd,

he bent down and picked up a handful of peanuts with the air of a man who didn't care how inferior were the people he stooped to favor.

That night Jakie had a long conference with Perl, and, after he left, Perl had a still longer one with herself. She came to understand well enough what the "poritzel" wanted of her, and realizing what a great temptation stood before her, she summoned to her aid the soul of her husband, her Talmid-Chochem, be the memory of the righteous for a blessing. And in the night, while she lay awake, he seemed to come to her and gave her guidance.

So the next morning she took Jakie aside, told him her decision, and ordered him to proceed to the "poritzel" alone. And she instructed him fully on what he was to say and she even made him repeat to her what she had told him in order to make sure that Jakie would say the right thing.

* * *

It is going to be a long time before Jakie forgets the great event of his mis-

sion to the artist's studio. For months afterwards Jakie liked nothing so much as to repeat the story to appreciative listeners, and to Perl herself he has told it at least half a dozen times.

"You think I was frightened, maybe?" says Jakie. "What do I care for their swell houses and carpets and everything? A feller with a whole lot of little shiny buttons takes me to the door, and I go in and I see the man standin' and holdin' up such a kind of a funny pan on his hand, full of all kinds of different paints, and painting a picture on a big stand. Say, it's the greatest fun watchin' 'im do that! It's like magic the way he makes a face with eyes and a nose and a mouth. And all over the room there is pictures and pictures and such statues, little ones and big ones, outa white marble and some outa gold.

"The artist, he stops painting and says to me: 'Where's the old lady?' And then his wife, the same lady that was here with him, gets up from such a kind of a big chair, all leather, and comes over near him.

"'The old lady ain't coming', says I. 'Why not?' says he, all disappointed. 'Because', says I, 'she don' wanna come.' And then I told him everything Perl told me to say. 'She says', says I to him, 'She don' wanna be put in a picture for a show like a actress. And it ain't no way to make a honest living, sitting for a show and doing nothing and taking money. An' she is a old woman with the fear of God in her and she don' believe in no graven images or pictures like you make. And she is sure her husband who is dead, peace unto him, and who was a great scholar, and whom she supported so he could study the Torah and Gemorrah, wouldn't like it at all. And was it right for her who used to support a Talmid-Chochem, to be making a show of herself in her old age? So you can't make her come noways,' says I, 'But she says if you want peanuts, she'll sell you all the peanuts you want.' That's all.

"Well, he makes a long face and says 'Bah!' and turns to his lady and says: 'Now, what do you think of that?' And

his lady says, all kind of excited: 'Why Jack', says she, 'I'm amazed! Why this—this is positively noble!' Yep, that's the words she says: 'Positively noble'. An' it means that Perl is a great woman! An' then when I go out, she goes after me an' calls me, an' slips me a half an' says: 'Here, little boy, tell Perl we want peanuts. We need a whole lot. And every week you'll bring us some, won't you?' 'Certainly, madam?' says I like they say it in Alger. An' then I says Good-bye, and the feller with the shiny buttons opens the door for me an' I march out like the Prince o' Wales."

"Jimminy!" says Jakie in conclusion, "Ain' it got Alger skinned a mile?"

## SHE COMES TO THE AID OF YOKEL THE EXPRESSMAN

YOKEL, the Expressman, whose moving van has its regular station on the corner next to the Peanut-Woman, is one of Perl's sincerest friends and admirers. Yokel is a bulky, stoop-shouldered man with a flat, crooked nose that seems to disappear into his blond moustache. Behind his big ribs beats a kindly heart, and his nature is as serious and artless as a child's. Perl he looks upon as a creature of superior brain, so whenever he finds himself in difficulties, he invariably comes to her.

"Have I a trouble!" said he to her one day, "Do you hear Perele, since Yokel is an expressman he was never in such a fix. I am hanging in the air, Perele, and I don't know what to begin to do. Maybe you can advise me, maybe?"

"If you had a different nose, Yokele, you could pass for a woman", said Perl.

"The nine measures of talk you have already. Come to the point!"

"What then will I do, Perele? But listen with your head and tell me if ever since the world is a world an expressman was in such trouble. You know the little Rebbele, don't you?—the one who is so big I could put him in my pocket? Well, the day before yesterday he comes to me with tears in his eyes and implores me to save him. What is? His landlord is throwing him out on the street, *bebeches* and all! And you know who the landlord is? Motel Noggid, the one who lives in the private house near the shool! The Rebbele didn't pay him the rent for those two holes just on the first, so Motel throws him out! And where should the Rebbele take it, where? He has then houses, has he, like Motel? 'Well, is what?' say I to my little one, 'You are not the first, you are not the last. In my days I have seen already enough *bebeches* on the street.' But he won't survive it, says he, the shame of it will kill him! There you have it, Perele! God sees a Jew is a *kabtzen*, a poor devil,

so He says to Himself: 'No, that Jew is not yet punished enough.' So what does He do? He makes him proud! Then, Perele, is oh and woe to his bones! It happens sometimes that an old, bony plug begins to throw up his head and twist his buttocks like a young race horse,—so you know what we do? We give him the whip and tell him to gallop up a nice hill, so he becomes a different beast! But what could I do with the Rebbele? There was no other way. I had to take the wagon straight over and pack his belongings into it. In the meantime he, the Rebbele, tells me he is going to look for new rooms, and makes me believe that by the time his things are packed away, he'll be back and tell me where to take them. Good, no?

"But Perele, my gold, that was the day before yesterday, and the Rebbele's things are still in my wagon! How do you like such a harness? I wait for him, and wait and wait, and his wife sits on the stoop and cries, and late at night he comes back, the little Rebbele, looking even smaller than he is, his face black

like the earth, and says he can't! He can't find any rooms! Two rooms are hard to find, and everywhere they ask for high rent, and he hasn't even enough to leave a deposit. What is to be done? Shall I unload the things on the sidewalk? My heart doesn't let me. So I try to cheer him up and tell him he'll have better luck to-morrow. And I take the things to the stable, and them, the little Rebbele and his wife and their Raisele, I take home for the night. What then was I to do? Let them sleep on the street?

"The next day, that is yesterday, I look at my Rebbele and I don't recognize him! A half, just a half of what he was! A morsel for a cat and no more! And he wasn't exactly sick, but crushed down, you understand, so crushed down he didn't have heart enough to move out of the house. And his wife? Well, you know her! Just sits and sheds tears! And I? You think I didn't cry, too? I cursed my days and I cried. What then could I do?

"Well, Perele, I ran around all day

yesterday, and,—will you believe me or not? I couldn't find anything. Whatever was cheap enough was so small, and dark, and ill-smelling, I didn't have the heart to move the Rebbele into it. I felt like a drowning man without even a straw to catch at. To-day I suddenly get it into my horse-head that I ought to go and talk it over with you. Because the Rebbele's things, you know, are still in the wagon, and he and his wife and his Raisele are still in my house, and if something isn't done my own landlord will soon throw my own *bebeches* on the street, and I won't even have a wagon to put them into. Because, you understand, I can't take on a single job. Only yesterday comes to me a woman and says: 'Yokel, I'm moving—'"

"Enough, Yokele, enough!" Perl the Peanut-Woman interrupted the expressman. "A man should have nine measures of talk! The heart of a child it has, and the tongue of a woman. A combination, nu! Tell me, Yokele, are the former rooms still empty?"

"Yes, I passed by only a little while ago and—"

"All right! Now be quiet a moment and let me think a little."

"Yokele", said Perl after due reflection, "To-night between afternoon and evening prayers, you'll be here with the wagon and then I'll tell you what there is to do. Do you hear?"

"But Perele—"

"Now, Yokel, if you ask another question you'll bite off your tongue, do you hear? A regular child, as God is a father!"

"Nu, good! Perele, good! I'll be here. You can depend on me."

When Yokel the expressman gets together with his brother-expressmen in the lower synagogue on a Sabbath afternoon before evening prayers, his "colleagues" almost have to use force to prevent him from repeating the story of Perl's great exploit in behalf of the Rebbele. Everything that is said and done seems to remind him of that story. And if you want to make him your friend for

"THERE HE IS!" SHE CRIED. "LOOK AT HIM!"

life, ask him to tell you that story, and don't interrupt him until he is through.

"I pulled up near Perl that day," he will tell you, "And she picks up her sack and soap box, swings them into the wagon, and then gets up on the box at my side.

"'To Motel Noggid!' says she like a grand lady speaking to her *shofar*.

"'God is with you!' say I. But she says to me: 'Are you riding or not?' And I ride.

"In less than ten minutes we arrive and she orders me to back up against the side-walk in front of Motel's house. Ever see that brigand's house? It's the finest little private house on the street, right next to the shool. A bell at the door, awnings on the windows, what's the use of talking? I tell you, may all Jews live in such houses, and you and I among them.

"'Unload!' says Perl to me and points to the side-walk. A cold sweat comes over me.

"'Perele,' I begin!—

"'Unload!' says she, and gives me a

look that goes down to my seventh rib.

"What's to be done, think I? And before I know it, I find myself unloading. Why am I doing it, say I to myself? And I go right ahead doing it like a horse that knows the way home. If you knew Perl you would understand.

"No sooner did I set down the old torn oil-cloth couch than people began to stop and look.

"'Who can be moving in to Motel Noggid?' they ask one another. And then, when they saw the rest of the beautiful furniture I was unloading, the wonder became greater and the talk louder. Old men and young came out of the synagogue, stood on the steps and on the porch, and cracked jokes and laughed.

"It didn't take long before Motel himself comes out on his stoop, in shirt sleeves and skull-cap, and looking as if he had just awakened from his afternoon nap. You should have seen his face! Like the face of a slaughtered sheep.

"'What—what is this?' he stammers.

"But as soon as Perl sees him she

begins. Say! I have heard the women in *shool* on Yom Kippur, but such an outpouring there never was!

"'There he is!' she cries, 'Look at him, Jews! There is the father of the orphans, the protector of the poor, the brigand who throws out on the street a poor sick Rebbele, a Talmid-Chochem, a God-fearing man, because he can't give him his rent on the first!' And so on and on,—who can repeat it all? You need to have the head of a minister, or a head like Perl's.

"Well, I am not going to hold you long. Motel came down, pale as a corpse, and wrung his hands and almost fell on his knees. And then she, Perl, tells me to go right on unloading, and takes him aside and lays down the law. What they said I didn't hear, but I saw Motel scratch his head and hold out his hands as though imploring her, and she shakes her head and stamps her foot on the side-walk and points to the crowd. Once I heard him say 'Policeman'. But no sooner did he say that word, than Perl turns to the crowd and 'Policeman!' she cries in

a tone of defiance, and Motel takes her by the hand and the bargain is soon made.

"How it was exactly I don't know, but it came out that Motel gave back to the Rebbele his old rooms and even went halves on what was coming to me. She made him a good account, you can be sure!

"Now tell me, I beg you, is there to be found in all Israel another such woman as Perl the Peanut-Woman?"

## A PAGE FROM HER MIRACULOUS PAST

WOULD anyone who saw Perl on a week-day imagine that this bronze-faced, horny-handed, loud-tongued old market-woman, so masterful with the hard realities of life, could ever become a creature of "dreams and fancies and strange imaginings"? Nevertheless, if you could but see the same Perl on a Sabbath afternoon, in her shining wig and brown dress, after a day of devotion and meditation wherein he, of course, her great scholar, be his memory for a blessing, plays the chief role, you would find her wonderfully changed. For then her rugged face grows smoother, its brown tints seem to take on the mellowness of a sunset sky. And from the vantage point of life's sunset, she looks back upon her zenith, back upon the heights she has traversed, and those heights become wrapped in a misty blue of wonder and

beauty. Fact becomes transfigured into fancy, realities blend into miracles.

"He, my Talmid-Chochem, peace unto him," Perl would say to her particular friend Jakie, the news-boy, and the others who come to visit her, "used to liken the Sabbath to a pure spring of water. The soul, which during the week becomes grimy, bathes in this spring and becomes pure again. But I, sinful woman that I am, used to answer that it was all very well to bathe the soul, but a Sabbath without fish and *tcholent* and *kugel* and *tzimmes* was no Sabbath. And then he would answer that for that very reason every pious Jew should entertain a poor-guest for the Sabbath in order that all Jews by being freed from the cares of the body could bathe their souls in the pure Sabbath spring.

"And I can tell you that he, for his part, used to bring home from synagogue almost every Friday night some poor stranger for over the Sabbath. And he used to enjoin me to treat the poor stranger even better than himself. And

you may be sure that both of them were treated well enough.

"But once—now listen well, *kinderlach*—he brought me a guest for the Sabbath at a time when I was in no mood at all to have one. What the trouble was? My oldest, a little boy of seven, was lying with a burning fever, he had been in bed for a whole week, refusing all food and drink except water, and to me it was the end of the world. All that week I had hardly had a wink of sleep, my heart was so crushed down to earth that I had scarcely thought of preparing anything for the Sabbath, and he, mine, you know, comes in with his 'Good-Sabbath', and at his heels a ragged stranger. A queer sort of stranger it was, with a long dirty-grey overcoat, which he never took off once, and a face all hair except the tip of his nose and two hungry eyes.

"I take mine aside and say to him bitterly:

"'That was all I needed. The child is burning like an oven, and you bring me a guest!'

"'Perl', was his answer, 'Who takes in a guest for the Sabbath takes Elijah the Prophet into his house.'

"'Husband mine,' said I, breaking down, 'I am afraid that now only he could save our Berele.'

"During all this time the stranger stands near the door and looks at me with his hungry, shining eyes.

"We sat down to table and went through the meal. You can imagine the kind of meal it was. I hardly touched a morsel. Every now and then I rose up to look at the child. Only he, the stranger, kept swallowing like a fish.

"When he heard us deliberating as to where we would put him up for the night, he spoke for the first time and said that he could sleep in the out-house, that it wasn't cold, and that, besides, he had a warm overcoat.

"That night, *kinderlach*, Berele was worse. I sat up at his bed putting cold towels to his head, and he tossed about and was being consumed as by a fire. Little by little the certainty crept into my heart that my child was going to die,

and I woke up my husband, and the other little ones got up also and we prayed and wept hopelessly.

"Then, suddenly, during a lull in our weeping, I hear a sound coming from the out-house. Our stranger is walking up and down muttering something in a quick monotonous way. Then I hear him knock on our door. I open, and without a word he goes in, approaches the bed of the child, lays his hand on his forehead and bends down and breathes on his face. That was what he did. I am telling it to you exactly as it happened. Then, in just the same way as he came in he went back again to his bed in the out-house.

"I turn to look at Berele and I notice that he has stopped tossing about and is lying perfectly still.

"'He is dead!' it burned through my head, and I bent down over him. I put my ear close to his mouth and—blessed be the Lord!—I hear him breathe! And it was not the short convulsive breath of fever, but slow and regular, though very weak. I sank back into my chair so

overcome that I was more dead than alive.

"We all remained by Berele's bed-side. Not one of us, not even the youngest could think of going to sleep. But after about half an hour I see Berele's lips begin to move. I bend down close to him and what do you think he wants? Milk, he asks for, goat's milk! Imagine my joy!

"But suddenly the joy vanished. I remembered that it was the Sabbath and that it was forbidden to milk the goat.

"'What am I to do? Help me!' I turned to my husband.

"But he, the pious one, peace unto him, only looked at me with a sort of terror and couldn't advise me yea or nay. Think of it, to milk a goat on the Sabbath! And as for me, my mind was clear. I knew that if Berele didn't get the milk he would die!

"But the door opens and in walks our Sabbath guest.

"'Go and milk the goat!' says he to me; 'Go, I permit it.'

"I look at my husband and he is as

though stunned. He could only nod his head and I rushed out for the stable.

"Now you must know something about that goat of ours. It was the worst cholera we ever had. A wild, crazy thing that used to eat up all the roofs in the neighborhood, and whenever I had to milk her it used to cost me my green gall. And now to have to wake her up and do it! So, as I rushed out, I snatched up a heavy stick and vowed that I would milk that goat, and do it in a hurry, if I had to kill her first.

"I reached the stable, and—but you will not believe me! There stood my goat, meek as a lamb, waiting to be milked! I know that you don't believe me, but I am telling you exactly what happened. I threw away that stick and I could have kissed that goat!

"Well, *kinderlach*, Berele drank the milk, and then he fell asleep. And he slept until morning. But my husband and I sat there by his bedside, and kept our eyes fixed on the sleeping child, and never dared once to look at each other.

"When it was quite morning, my hus-

band, peace unto him, rose up and went to the out-house in order to wake up our Sabbath guest and proceed with him to the morning service in the synagogue. In less than a minute he came back, and we looked at each other for the first time, and his face was as white as a sheet.

"'He is gone!' said he to me and then he said something in the holy tongue which I, ignorant woman that I am, did not understand.

"But was it really necessary I should understand it? I knew and understood enough without it. I knew well enough who our Sabbath guest had been".

And the face of the Peanut-Woman as she ends her tale of the miracle is aglow with exultation. The mystic hand of memory, evoked by the peace of the Sabbath afternoon, has touched and transfigured the soul of the hardened market-woman.

## SHE ATTENDS A SHOOL MEETING

ONE morning, as the little Rebbele, on his way to do his wife's marketing, passed by and greeted Perl the Peanut-Woman, she called him and beckoned to him to come nearer.

"I wanted to talk something over with you", she said.

"By all means", the little teacher encouraged her.

"It's about Jakie the news-boy. He is an orphan, as you know, living with a married brother, and growing up without learning a Jewish word,—a real *goy*. He is only twelve years old and ought to go to Cheder, but that brother of his doesn't worry about it. So I have turned it over in my mind, and I want to ask you to take him in yourself for at least an hour a day."

"All right, Perele, I have so many loifers, there will be another one," re-

plied the little man with his own little smile of resignation.

But when she spoke about paying him he refused to hear of it.

"From you, Perele, I'll take money for teaching an orphan!" he declared. "Send him to me this afternoon". And there the consultation ended.

Late that same afternoon Jakie the news-boy, galloping along with his papers to make up for the hour spent in Cheder, stopped long enough to show Perl a bruised face and tell her a brief tale of triumph.

"I couldn' stan' it", he told her. "I couldn' stan' it the way those fellers are treatin' the Rebbele. They holler an' kick the floor an' play marbles in Cheder an' do all kinds o' mean things. And to Raisele, his daughter who learns with the little ones, they are fresh too. So I cleaned up two of them to-day and it got quieter. And to-morrow, I guess, I'll have to clean up some more. They ain't got no pity on 'im at all. I'll show 'em!" And Jakie dashed off again shouting his extra in his high treble.

"A golden heart that child has, a golden heart", said Perl to herself.

A few days later, however, the Rebbele stopped near the Peanut Woman's sack and poured into her ears a tale of troubles.

"It is bad, Perele, bad!" declared the little man. "That orphan of yours has brought me to ruin."

"God is with you!" exclaimed Perl in affright. "He told me only yesterday that your Cheder was now as quiet as a Public School."

"It will soon be as quiet as a cemetery," said the Rebbele. "Yesterday he had a fight with Reb Shmuel's ornament and blackened his eyes and knocked out one of his teeth."

"Nu, is what?" said Perl. "Serves him right! He must have deserved it!"

"Of course he deserved it! But that's not the point. The point is that Reb Shmuel is our president."

"President?" queried Perl.

"Sure, the president of the shool. And whatever he says goes, and whatever he does everybody else does. And that ornament of his is an only son."

"But still—"

"Listen, Perele. Last night he came to me in a terrible wrath. 'Who is that loifer,' he says to me, 'who beat my son?' 'What can I do if loifers fight?' say I. 'Never mind', says he, 'I know. He fights with everybody. Either you send away that loifer or I take away my son. And if my son goes you know what will happen.' "

"What will happen?" asked Perl innocently.

"God is with you!" said the Rebbele. "Didn't I tell you? All the others will take away their sons also. I'll be left without bread."

Perl looked at the Rebbele as though stunned. Then she exploded:

"All wild and dark dreams on his head and life, on his hands and feet! Was there ever such a thing! And is it all because he is the president?"

The Rebbele nodded slowly.

"But will he then always remain president?"

The Rebbele explained that Reb Shmuel had held that office for the past eight

years and that although he had his rivals, there was little likelihood of his losing it at the next election.

"Election?" asked Perl. "What do you mean election?"

Again the Rebbele explained and with great detail. Perl listened with the attention of one who is hearing tales of another world.

"And when are they going to elect him again?" she asked.

"As it happens, at the next meeting on Saturday night. I got the notice from the secretary this morning."

"Rebbele", said Perl earnestly, "It's a great injustice and I will not allow it!"

The Rebbele was amazed. "But what can you do?" he demanded.

"I am only a woman, the Merciful One protect us!" said Perl; "But just wait a few days more".

"A few days more," said the Rebbele, "will not matter. But it's hopeless, Perele, hopeless!"

And very sadly the little man went off on his errand.

The next day, which was a Friday,

Reb Shmuel, the President, a short but well-rounded individual, was sitting behind the counter of his big dry-goods store drinking tea and keeping a watchful eye on his clerks, when Perl came up to him, and without useless introductions endeavored to persuade him to reverse his decision regarding the Rebbele.

"Woman!" said the President majestically after a long sip of tea. "Why do you come here to bother me? Can't you see I am busy?"

"Reb Shmuel," replied Perl, "I ask you in good will. But if you take the Rebbele's bread out of his mouth you will regret it."

"Woman!" Reb Shmuel rose up in all the grandeur of five feet two inches, "Have you come here to threaten me?"

"You are an ornament in Israel!" retorted Perl, "Such a year on you!" And she went away.

The following night Reb Shmuel, expanded with satisfaction and dignity, sat in a large chair in front of a marble-covered stand and faced the men of his congregation in meeting assembled. The

chair, large and elaborately carved, with a very high ornamental back, almost hid him from view, but he made his presence sufficiently known by his gavel, which he pounded mercilessly on the little stand in front of him. And you may be sure the gavel was needed that night, for it was election meeting and everybody was in a state of excitement.

Reb Shmuel had just been nominated for re-election, with Motel Noggid as rival candidate, when a sudden noise was heard near the door. The sergeant-at-arms was trying hard to keep some one out who was trying to get in. A chorus of voices rose up and mingled with the sound of pushing and scuffling.

Reb Shmuel raised his gavel and dealt the stand so tremendous a blow that the head of the gavel sprang off and fell at the feet of Motel Noggid. At the same time he saw facing him near the door, hair dishevelled, clothes disarranged and eyes flashing fire, Perl the Peanut-Woman. She had forced her way in despite the effort of the sergeant-at-arms to keep her out.

"What is this?" shouted Reb Shmuel as he turned a shade paler; "Why did you let that woman in? Put her out!"

"She had her foot in the door", explained the breathless sergeant-at-arms. "And if you want her put out, try it yourself".

Reb Shmuel made his way hastily from the chair to the door, but, strange to relate, instead of trying to put Perl out, he beckoned her to a far corner of the meeting hall, and there he and she began to whisper together. It was hard to hear what they said, especially as every time Perl raised her voice Reb Shmuel whispered "Shhhhh"! with every appearance of alarm. But those standing nearest heard several times the words: "scandal", "Rebbele", "great injustice" and "your son".

There was one in that mystified audience, the Rebbele himself, however, who followed all these events with knowledge and sinking of the heart. His amazement, therefore, was unbounded when he saw Reb Shmuel beam on Perl, and beckon to her to follow him to the front.

"Brothers!" said Reb Shmuel in the

society form of address, "Perl the Peanut-Woman, an honest Jewish daughter, whom many of you know, wishes to say a few words."

"My Masters", said Perl in the proper Hebrew form of address, her loud voice even more mannish than usual, "I didn't imagine that when I came here I would have any trouble in being allowed to speak to you. And your President, whom I hope you will elect again to-night, gives me permission. So I want to ask all of you who have children to send to Cheder to send them to our little Rebbele. He never speaks for himself so I have decided to speak for him. He is the best teacher, a Talmid-Chochem and great scholar, and in his Cheder you will find the best order. Your President himself sends his son to him and recommends him very highly. That is all I wanted to say and I ask you to pardon me. I am only a woman."

Then she turned and looked at Reb Shmuel and the latter stepped forward, sought out the Rebbele and shook hands with him in the sight of the entire congre-

gation. And Perl, with a glance of triumph at the Rebbele, walked out without looking to the right or left.

The same night Reb Shmuel was re-elected President and Jakie the newsboy continued to attend the Rebbele's Cheder where his position as disciplinarian became established beyond dispute.

And the Rebbele, when he passes the Peanut-Woman's stand in the morning on his way to do his wife's marketing, experiences a feeling which almost amounts to awe, as though he found himself in the presence of Deborah, prophetess and leader in Israel.

# THE SURRENDER OF GETZEL SHMEKTABAK

AMONG her numerous achievements and triumphs, Perl herself looks upon her conquest of Getzel Shmektabak as a slight matter. But those who know Getzel have not yet ceased to marvel over it.

Be it known, first of all, that Getzel Shmektabak—who owed his nickname to the incredible quantities of snuff he used to take—himself sold peanuts on the opposite corner. He was therefore Perl's competitor and considered her his natural enemy. Also, it should be known that Getzel was a pessimist in general and hated all womankind in particular. Bitter experiences with three wives, all of them divorced, people said, had soured his nature. Many of Getzel's pessimistic sayings became known. "A human being", he used to say, "is like a peanut. Death comes and cracks it and swallows

it and there's an end!" Another one was: "A woman is like an empty peanut. The shell looks pretty but inside there is nothing with nothing."

Getzel was known to lead a solitary life; and owing to that fact, and to his silence on matters relating to himself, there arose concerning him rumors of all sorts. It was said by some that he possessed a big hoard of money hidden away somewhere in the little dark room which he inhabited. Others, who pretended to know more about him, claimed that he was a poor devil and had a ne'er-do-well son whom he was secretly supporting. Some asserted that Getzel was a learned man, a *lamdan*, and used to sit up till very late in the night over the Talmud. Others claimed that he was no *lamdan* at all but simply sat up late counting and recounting his pennies.

From Getzel himself nothing could be learned. His small, rotund, sombre-clad figure, with its morose, pock-marked face and bulbous nose remained as enigmatic as it was familiar. He formed a striking contrast to Perl not only in appearance

but in disposition as well, for just as Getzel was by nature a pessimist, Perl was by nature an optimist.

"Reb Getzel", she once said to him, "God is a father. He feeds the little birds and he will find enough for both of us."

To which Getzel replied:

"God is a father, and he has always seen fit to punish me with his worst punishment: woman." And since that time Getzel saw fit to look upon Perl as a virago specially sent down by the Almighty to plague his old age.

Now, it happened that one morning Getzel did not appear at his peanut stand as usual. When he appeared the following morning Perl noticed that although the weather was mild, Getzel wore a thick shawl around his neck and that his face seemed drawn and pitiful. Perl's heart gave a sudden twitch, but the next moment she caught herself and was angry with herself.

"Why should I have pity on him?" she thought. "An old dog, always growling."

But the next day Getzel again failed

to appear, and Perl, in spite of herself, found herself thinking that he must be sick and wondering if he would appear the next morning. "What can be the matter with the old pig?" she wondered. "It must be no slight thing since he is staying away from his business. And then he must be eating up his heart thinking how all his customers are now coming to me. And who is taking care of the old miser?" Thus was Perl's mind all day occupied with thinking of Getzel Shmektabak.

But when her competitor failed to appear again on the following day, Perl called Jakie the news-boy and sent him off to investigate. At night Jakie came to Perl's lodgings and reported.

"I found 'im!" he announced triumphantly. "I had to ask about twenty people before I found 'im. He lives in a basement in a back room, and in front there is another man who fixes umbrellas and pots. I found Getzel lying on his bed and talking. He was talking from fever, the umbrella-fixer said, and he don' know what to do with

him. Getzel couldn' even recognize me and he looks like he is through. It's a pity on the old one just the same."

"And there is no one even to bring him a spoon-full of water?" asked Perl.

"Looks like it", answered Jakie.

And before Jakie knew what was happening to him, he felt his hand in Perl's strong grip, and found himself almost being dragged to the door.

"Come, Jakele", she cried, "Let us go there!"

When Getzel's fever was somewhat abated by the ice-bag which Perl had contrived and laid on his head, he opened his eyes and slowly came to an understanding of the situation. And Getzel scowled.

"*Gecholim*!" (coals of fire) said he in Hebrew, but seeing that the enemy did not understand he translated the word.

"Does it burn as much as that?" cried Perl innocently. "Dear God in Heaven!" And she took Jakie aside and told him to go and not to return without the doctor.

The doctor took Perl for Getzel's wife.

"Your husband", said he, and Getzel shook himself and groaned, "is very sick. In a few days he will have a crisis. Give him this medicine and keep ice on his head all night."

When Getzel saw Perl plunge her hand into her deep pocket for the doctor's fee he stared as if he was seeing a ghost. Then he moaned faintly and the next minute he was off in a delirium, railing at imaginary women and calling them all by the sharp Hebrew name *Arurah* (virago).

Perl and Jakie divided between them the labor of watching. As for the umbrella-fixer, as soon as Perl saw him, she decided he was a *lekish*, not to be depended on. He would fall asleep after his day's work and sleep like the dead.

When Perl realized that more help would be needed, Jakie came forward with the proposal that Raisele, the Rebbele's daughter, be enlisted in the cause. Perl looked at Jakie quizzically.

"It seems you think a whole lot of the Rebbele's Raisel", she remarked. And Jakie blushed and protested he didn't

care whom she asked to help. But, none the less, Perl went to the Rebbele and got his consent for Raisele.

The night of the crisis Perl herself sat up at Getzel's bedside carrying out faithfully all the doctor's prescriptions. Getzel in his ravings declared he was only a peanut, and wanted to know by what right some *Arurah* or other was going to crack him and swallow him. And Perl fussed around him and shed copious tears, and ordered Jakie and Raisele, as long as they were there, to say Psalms.

When the doctor came in the morning, Getzel was without fever but wholly exhausted, and all three of his nurses were at his bedside.

"You've pulled through", said the doctor, "And you owe it all to your wife and children".

Getzel turned his dull eyes on his "wife and children", and uttered a low moan that sounded like a sob.

"Look!" said Raisele, "Look at the tears coming from his eyes!"

Some days later Getzel ventured out

of bed. Jakie was still bringing him little pots which Perl was cooking for him.

"Tell her I'm all-right now", Getzel said to Jakie. "I can now cook for myself."

A few days more and Getzel was able to go out. He appeared on the street one morning, his head emerging from heaps of suspenders that hung down his shoulders.

In sight of all, he approached Perl sitting at her sack. A few curious ones followed him and heard him.

"I have gone into a new business, as you see", said he to her. "I don't want to be your competitor. I will try to pay back what I have cost you, but God will pay you back much more". And then he added: "You are a true *Aishes-Chayil*, Perele, like the one that King Solomon sang about. One in ten thousand!"

Now, there are some who believe that because Getzel had said "one in ten thousand", he was still the same old misogynist as of yore, but the majority

are of the opinion that Getzel Shmektabak had been conquered, and they cannot stop marvelling that Perl the Peanut-Woman was able to accomplish what had seemed to all to be impossible.

# JAKIE AND RAISELE

PERL the Peanut-Woman, sitting at her sack, tucked herself, as it were, into her thick shawl to keep out the sharp gusts of autumn wind that swept down the street and raised little whirls of dust and papers. The few leaves that still clung to the puny trees in the little Park opposite shivered with terror, but one by one, and without mercy, they were blown and swept away, shrivelled and helpless.

"Once they were smooth and green," thought Perl, "and drank happily of the juice of the earth and of the light of the sun, and now—woe to them! Even so is a human being. And I too am an old dried leaf, and the wind is blowing hard, and soon, soon—" And Perl was beset with gloomy thoughts that cheerless autumn day.

"And when the Great Wind blows me away," she asked herself, will I be taken straight to him, be his memory for a

blessing, to my *lamdan*, for whom I toiled all the days of my prime that he might study the Law and earn a portion of the World to Come for himself and me?" And at this thought her natural cheerfulness revives. Her day will come then! Then will she laugh at all her enemies, at all those who make light of her past toil and sacrifice. Yes, now they laugh at her, here in America they laugh at her, for having supported a great scholar in the study of the Law. The man, they say, should be the bread-winner. And who, pray, will study the Law? The woman, maybe? A topsy-turvy world! America is a topsy-turvy world!

She was shaken out of her revery by the appearance of the Rebbele.

"A good morning", said he, "We have already Ellul in the air."

"I", answered Perl sadly , "Have Ellul in my heart."

"Ah, Perele", replied the little man, "Why be sorrowful? Better listen to my troubles. I have a new trouble, Perele."

"What are you a Jew for if not to have troubles?"

"But this one is brand new, and it's all over that orphan you took under your wing, that Jakele."

"A golden heart, Rebbele! You hear? The child has a golden heart."

"No matter what kind of heart he has, he has lost it, as they write in the novels". (For just as Jakie doted on Alger, the Rebbele, it seemed, liked to read those endless romances of love and intrigue that ran in the newspapers). Perl, however, could not understand.

"Lost his heart?" she repeated, "God is with you, Rebbele, what is in your mind?'

"Listen, listen," urged the Rebbele, "And maybe you'll be able to advise me, because, you know, Perele, I am a father and I have no right to close my eyes and say: 'It's nothing, I don't see anything.'"

"But speak out! What do you see?"

"I see enough already! And to tell you the truth, I began seeing from the very first day. And maybe it's too late already. Maybe I should have spo-

ken to you before, Perele.— Yes, yes, I am coming to the point! Children in America, Nu!

"So, as I was telling you, the first time he, your Jakie, came to my Cheder, I examined him and found he could barely read his prayers correctly. I was shocked.

"'A big boy like you, more than twelve years old', said I to him, 'And can't read your prayers yet!'

"'I was too busy with the papers', says he, and lowers his eyes.

"'Aha!' think I to myself, 'You're ashamed! That's a good sign.' and I say to him:

"'Jakie, it's not exactly nice for a big boy like you to be Raisele's pupil, but it can't be helped. You'll have to learn with her through Genesis, like all the others.'"

Here Perl interrupted the little teacher.

"Your Raisel", she asked in surprise, "Teaches your pupils to translate the Bible also?"

"A question!" answered the little man proudly. "And a page of Talmud, do you think, she couldn't teach them?

Ah, you don't know my Raisele! She has the head of a Goen! A child with all good qualities. Without her I don't know how I could get along! You should have seen your Jakie taking his first lesson from my Raisele. He kept his eyes not on the page but under the table, and all the time his face was as red as a beet. And I look at him and think to myself: 'Good! My young man is ashamed. That means he'll learn well in order to graduate quickly from Raisele's class'. The others, the loifers, were not slow to size up the situation and began to tease him. But your Jakie seemed to find that a relief. He got up and picked out the biggest one and knocked him down. After that he seemed to feel better. He sat down again and was no more ashamed to look at the page and follow Raisele's pointer. But I noticed that now my Raisele's behavior seemed changed. It was her face that was now as red as a beet, she looked hard at the page and the pointer even trembled in her hand.

"But after that day everything seemed

to be all-right. All the loifers now had respect for Jakie, more than for me, I confess, and the Cheder became a quiet place, a Paradise, I tell you. Only whenever Jakie came in, I noticed Raisele look up at him, and he looked at her, then both lowered their eyes, and both faces became like beets. 'What should it mean?' I asked myself. 'Why are they ashamed before one another?'

"One day as Jakie finished his lesson and rose to go out, I noticed he handed something to my Raisele on the sly. You see, I was suspicious and was watching them all the time. And I saw what it was he gave her. It was a package of chocolate. He put it swiftly into her hand and ran out leaving her with her face as red as fire.

"Several days later he comes to me with a petition. Whereas he is such a big boy, and whereas he is anxious to learn with me, would I allow him to come at night after supper and take an extra half hour or so with Raisele?

"'And is Raisele willing to give you that extra time?' I asked in surprise.

"'She is willing', he answered softly.

"What is there to do? A child wants to learn, shall I discourage him?

"'But Raisele has her own work to do at that time. She has to clean up after supper, for example.'

"'I could help her do that', he says, and his face just beams.

"That same night he came and Raisele taught him. Before they sat down, however, he helped her with the dishes. She washed them and he dried them. I sat at the table over my newspaper, but I couldn't take my eyes off those children. Looking at those two, he with his black hair and lively little face, and she with her blond braids and those dreamy bashful eyes of hers, I found them even more interesting than Fefer's novel in the 'Morning Journal.'

"When they sat down opposite me at the table and began the lesson, I was surprised to see what progress he had made in the two or three weeks. She was already reading with him the twenty-fourth chapter of Genesis. I pretended to be absorbed in my newspaper novel,

but I kept listening and spying on them all the time. He was translating with her the story of Eliezer, the servant of Abraham, who went to the land of Aram-Naharaim to find a wife for his master's son. You know the story, Perele: how Eliezer met Rebekah at the well and afterwards took her with him to be the wife of Isaac. I tell you, Perele, never did that story sound so beautiful in my ears as that night when those two children read it together, with their black and blond heads almost touching.

"They were nearing the end, but I continued to listen, only occasionally turning my newspaper in order to keep up the pretense of reading it. Raisele translated:

"'*And Isaac went out to meditate in the field at the eventide; and he lifted up his eyes and saw, and behold, there were camels coming.*'

"I look furtively at my young man. His eyes are not even on the page. They are looking intently at Raisele, and her eyes are glued to the page and pointer.

"She translated the last verse of the chapter:

"'*And Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah's tent, and took Rebekah and she became his wife; and he loved her; and Isaac was comforted for his mother.*'

"The chapter is finished. But Raisele still keeps her eyes glued to the page. She does not dare raise them. She knows Jakie's eyes are fixed on her. And gradually a red spot appears on her cheeks, and becomes deeper and spreads over her face and her ears.

"'Raisele', I hear Jakie whisper. 'I am an orphan, just like Isaac. I have no mother.'

"'ShSh—' whispers Raisele, still not daring to look at him.

"'And I love you, Raisele', Jakie continues.

"I rose quickly from my seat, making my newspaper crackle. They both rose at the same moment and both looked at me with a frightened expression. But I turned and walked into the next room. Then I saw them look up at each other

and smile, and Jakie said good-night and went home.

"Well, Perele, I lay awake a good part of the night thinking of those children and their foolishness and wondering what I ought to do. And this morning it suddenly occurred to me that since you have taken Jakie under your wing, I ought to tell you about it and find out what you think. Tell me, now, Perele, how do you like this business?"

Perl remained for some time absorbed in thought. In her heart there had crept in a warmth as of Spring, and the chill wind and falling leaves existed for her no more. Finally she said with a glow on her wrinkled and rugged face:

"Rebbele, it may be it is all ordained from above. Don't separate the children —that would be a sin. It may all be from above,—and there can be no harm. He has a heart of gold, Jakele, do you hear? And she, —you don't have to tell me; a diamond she is, and she has the head of a great *lamdan*. It's all ordained from above, all from above."

And after the Rebbele, who found Perl's

verdict in accord with his own secret and romantic notions, had left her, the Peanut-Woman wrapped her shawl closer around her old shoulders, and gave herself up to her reveries. And the spirit of him, her sainted scholar, returned to reign over her memories, now become indefinably tender and mellow despite the chill wind of autumn.

On a sudden, however, she was struck with the queerness of it all, and she murmured to herself:

"It's a topsy-turvy world, this America! There you have it! She—the female—is the great scholar, the lamdan, and he—the male, will be the provider. Nu, nu! What a world this America is!"

# BENJY AND REUBY

# THE CONQUEST OF THE SOIL

"SAY, REUBY! Just can all that about soldiers and fightin'. I wanna tell you something you forgot."

"Shoot, Benjy."

It was a warm evening early in May, and the two friends, already barefooted to greet the coming summer, were seated side by side on the curb near the tiny park, unmindful of the din and surge of the crowded street, entirely given over to the important matters they were discussing.

"Reuby," said Benjy to his friend, flipping a pebble to the opposite sidewalk, "This morning my mother says Shovuos is coming on pretty soon, and not a bit of green growing in the house."

"You wan' it to grow outa your wash-tub?" demanded Reuby.

"What's the use o' your smartness? I was thinking, Reuby, it's time we got some earth from the park and planted

something on the fire-escape, beans or onions or something. As long as there's something green growing in the house, says ma."

"Get some earth from the park!" exclaimed Reuby. "And what about Pie-face Paddy?"

"Ah!" Benjy admitted, "he's a holy terror, ain' he?"

Pie-face Paddy, so-called on account of his red-blotched, bloated face, was the keeper of the tiny park in the neighborhood. He was an old man of huge bulk with a lame foot that shuffled as he dragged it along. After sweeping the few walks in the morning, his principal occupation was to growl and shout at the children who ventured on the grass, or to shuffle furiously after those whom his growling did not frighten. He sometimes succeeded in catching one in spite of his dragging foot, and then he certainly did not "strain the quality of mercy." It should be recorded also, that in spite of the watch-dog nature of Pie-face Paddy, the puny little park over which he lorded seemed unable to grow

any grass. It was as bald as the crown of Paddy's head. But Paddy himself was the bugaboo of all the children of the neighborhood.

"Reuby," said Benjy after a moment's thought, "you have a lot to say about the soldiers these days, ain't you? But do you know who was even better fighters than all of 'em?"

"Well, who? say yourself."

"The Jews," announced Benjy.

"Ah, g'wan."

"What, you don't believe that, smarty?" Benjy scowled. "Didn' they beat Og, the King of Bashan, who was a giant, and all the Kings of Amalek and Canaan, and didn' they settle in their land after a lot of war and battles?"

Reuby was thoroughly silenced.

"Say, Reuby," continued Benjy, after another interval, "I wonder if Og the King of Bashan was much bigger than Pie-face Paddy."

"Huh," said Reuby, "couldn't have been much, I guess."

"Well now," Benjy mused, "that giant

Og couldn't stop those twelve tribes from getting their soil, could he?"

"Well?"

"Well," Benjy repeated disdainfully, "look at Pie-face Paddy. He kin stop us all right."

"Ah! but they wuz twelve tribes and we're only two," objected Reuby.

Benjy seemed to be argued down. But after a moment his face brightened.

"My, but yer an awful dunce, Reuby," he declared, "don'tcha know that the ten tribes is all lost, and that there's only two left, anyhow? The Jews has got to fight with only two tribes these days."

"Well, they can't do much." Reuby was pessimistic.

"Can't they, though? I'll show ye if they can't." Benjy stood up for emphasis. "I tell ye what, Reuby, I'm gonna get some of that earth from Pie-face Paddy, see if I don't. Just to show ye, if they can or not. There's gonna be green things growing for Shovuos, Reuby; see if there ain't!"

## II

The next day the two friends spent most of their time examining the field of battle and watching the movements of the enemy. Pie-face Paddy appeared to them to be more vigilant than usual. Perhaps he was aware that enemies had designs on his soil.

The little park was about a block in size, oblong in shape, with a tall, sharp-pointed iron fence around it. A walk curved through the middle, stopping at a gate on each end. Having examined the gates carefully, Benjy noticed that one of them bore a ring, which, when the gate closed, came to meet another ring attached to the fence. Benjy saw that by inserting a stick of wood through both rings the gate could be made fast.

Thereupon, having concluded that it would be unwise to meet the enemy in open combat, he decided to make use of ruse and stratagem, methods of combat approved in all codes of warfare. Accordingly, he devoted an entire meeting with Reuby one evening in mapping out

the plan of campaign, which it was decided to carry out the very next day.

The following afternoon the two warriors of Israel approached the land of the enemy, bent on the conquest of the soil. At that hour of the day the park was almost deserted. Pie-face Paddy sat on a bench, placidly smoking his corncob, his little eyes roving about furtively, on the lookout for any chance raiders. As he happened to direct his glance towards Reuby, he saw something which almost made him doubt his vision. For there, right near the gate, knelt little Reuby, shovel in hand, and a wooden box at his side. It was only when Paddy saw the first shovelful of the precious soil fall into the box, that he roused himself from his stupor, as it were, and with a huge bellow launched himself at the poacher.

Meanwhile, Benjy was strolling along the walk with an entirely unconcerned air. His instructions to Reuby had been not to decamp immediately, but to wait until Paddy was quite near him. Poor Reuby, however, seeing the huge bulk

pitching towards him like a ship in a storm, and with incredible rapidity, dropped his shovel and dashed out through the gate. Nevertheless Benjy's plan did not miscarry. For Paddy was so enraged that he did not content himself with the flight of the invader, but rushed out in pursuit beyond the gate.

That was Benjy's cue. He sprang forward, swung the heavy gate to, and jammed through the two iron rings the stick which he had brought for the purpose. Then without losing a moment he pounced upon the shovel and began to fling the soil into the wooden box.

Pie-face Paddy heard the heavy gate slam behind him, and stopped in his pursuit. He turned round and seeing what Benjy was doing, he uttered a terrible roar and threw himself on the gate. But it held fast, and Paddy at once realized his shameful plight. Barred from his own domains, with the plundering enemy in full possession! Again he threw himself against the gate, but realizing the uselessness of his efforts he started around the iron fence for the gate at the

other end, bellowing like a mad bull.

But in the meantime, Benjy had almost filled the box, and was yelling to Reuby to come back. The latter, seeing Paddy at the other end of the park, recovered his courage, approached the iron railing, and received the box and shovel which Benjy passed him between the bars. Then he got the order to run, and Reuby obeyed without losing a moment.

Then Benjy took hold of the stick in the rings to wrench it out, and open the gate in order to follow his friend. But the stick held fast, and strain as he might Benjy was unable to remove it. Paddy's weight, it seems, must have tightened it beyond the poor strength of little Benjy to move it. And there was Paddy himself behind him, almost ready to seize him. What was to be done?

Benjy decided it would be useless to try to climb the tall sharp-pointed bars of the fence. So he turned round and faced the on-coming enemy. "Let me die with the Philistines!" he cried, and seeing the wide-separated legs of the enemy waddling on upon him, he tried

to dive right through them, and became entangled among those massive limbs.

## III

Some evenings later Benjy and Reuby were sitting together on the curb and were telling each other of the remarkable progress that was being made by their respective beans and onions.

"Say, Benjy," remarked Reuby suddenly, "it must a' hurt awful when Pie-face took you by the neck."

"Who says so?" demanded Benjy. "An' how do you know he got me by the neck? Just because I got those marks there? I got those diving at his legs, that's how."

"Ah, but when he pulled your ears?"

"Aw, come off, you make me tired, just the same. Who won the battle, anyhow? Did the Jews conquer their soil or didn't they?"

"They did," Reuby had to admit.

"An' are they gonna have green things for Shovuos, or not?"

"They are," Reuby again allowed.

"Then what are ye baby-crying about anyways?"

"Who, me? Why should I be crying?"

"Yer a pretty fine soldier, Reuby; and you read the papers about the war, too. How do you expect ter have a war without—whad ye call it, when soldiers get killed and wounded?"

"Cazhulties," Reuby prompted.

"Yes, without cazhulties." And Benjy took up a pebble and flipped it over the fence into the park.

## TWO ELIJAHS

"YOU wanna make a lot o' money, Reuby?"

"How, Benjy?"

"Work for Yankel the Peddler. He just passed by with a lot o' matzoh bundles and gallons o' wine. He says he is busy like a cockroach and he needs somebody to help him bring the orders."

"That's me, Benjy!"

"I told 'im you an' me'll go partners on the job if he'll take us, an' he said all right."

"Hooray! When do we start!"

"Wait a minute, Reuby! Don't jump so much. Didja ever try liftin' one of those matzoh bundles and the big gallons o' wine?"

"Hey, Benjy! Feel this, will you?" And Reuby shut his arm tight and pointed to his biceps. Benjy felt it until Reuby screamed.

"You couldn't carry one of 'em thre

blocks;" said Benjy disdainfully, "And Yankel says we gotta carry a whole lot at a time."

"Oooh! Waddare we gonna do, Benjy?"

"Well, you think you're a wise one, donche? Wadda you gotta say now?"

"We could hire a push-cart, Benjy!"

"Push-cart! You got some idees. Dontche know for a push-cart you gotta be a citizen an' get a license an' have a pull? How do you suppose Blinkey's father kin peddle with figs an' *bukser* now?"

"Well, I give up!"

"Don' make such a funeral face yet, Reuby. Do you remember the wagon I had last summer with baby-carriage wheels?"

"I gotche, Benjy!"

"We're gonna start to-morrow, right after school."

"Where'll we go?"

"Oh, up town an' all over. Most o' Yankel's customers live uptown, rich an' swell. Yankel says the people down-town is no good. They want everything cheap, an' besides, they all become Mat-

zoh peddlers before Passover. An' then they are all so protikler about everything bein' kosher. Uptown they don' care so much."

"What! They don' care if the matzohs is real kosher?"

"Naw, they don'. They are very high-tone. Some of 'em eat bread on Passover even, an' they buy matzohs just for fun, to show off or somethin'. That's what Yankel says, anyways."

"I'd be afraid to come in to people like that, Benjy. They must be awful swell."

"You gotta know the business, Reuby. Leave it to me. An' then Yankel says you get lots of tips off these people."

"Waddle we do with all the money, Benjy?"

"That should be my last worry! I'll buy a new suit for Passover, the kind with belts an' folds, you know."

"An' I'll get 'em with bloomers, Benjy! An' maybe we'll have enough for a pair o' skates, too, hey, Benjy?"

"Maybe. Wait an' see. Well, then, to-morrow after school. I'll get my old

wagon outa the cellar an' have everything ready. Yankel says he'll have enough work for us till the last day after Passover."

* * *

The day before Passover! The day which is followed by the night when Jews become kings, their wives queens, and the prophet Elijah descends from heaven to be a guest at the coronation feast! What bustle and hustle in the "Jewish" streets of the city, what breathless hurrying of housewives making their final purchases; what lusty shouting of vendors, from the man who sells you fresh fish caught only yesterday—so, at least, he tells you—to the one who sells you the *Haggadah*, that marvellous three-thousand-year-old story which never grows old.

And yet, only walk across the Park and emerge into the streets on the other side and you find yourself in an every-day, hum-drum, respectable silence, as if this day were like any other day of the year! No, these are no longer the "Jewish" streets. Nevertheless, should it suit your fancy to read some of the names

over the door-bells, you might find that if there are not many that end in "sky" and "witz," there are not few that end in "heim" and "heimer."

But look! What strange intrusion is this upon the regularity and respectability of the scene? An old little vehicle composed of a soapbox on axles and wheels that once belonged to a baby's go-cart, pulled by one ragged little urchin and pushed by another. In the box are a number of bundles in light-brown paper inscribed with bold Hebrew letters, and some large demi-johns well corked and sealed.

Let us follow this equipage which seems to have dropped from another world. The little faces of the proprietors are flushed and seamed with perspiration. Their expression is serious and almost worried, like that of a man burdened with an important responsibility. And, in truth, is it not of the highest importance that every Jewish table, this night, be furnished with unleavened bread and Passover wine? Nevertheless, the occupants of the particular house which our

two perspiring heroes reached with their last bundle and last demi-john, could not, as we shall see, have regarded those things as important as they really are.

In accordance with the instructions which Yankel the Peddler had given them, Reuby remained on the sidewalk guarding the "wagon," while Benjy rang the bell of the basement gate. A red face appeared behind the grating and a gruff female voice demanded:

"What's it ye be wantin', brat?"

"I'v brought the matzohs and wine from Yankel," answered Benjy importantly.

"What?" demanded the voice as its owner leaned forward and showed two muscular forearms against the grating.

"Matzohs and wine from Yankel," repeated Benjy.

"Yankel!" exclaimed the other, "Wine, batzes! What's that ye be tellin' me? Get ye gone with yer Yankel and batzes! Divil a bit o' Yankel did I order! It's the wrong place ye've got, brat."

"No, it ain't," was the prompt answer.

"This is my number, 52 West, and you're the party."

"So it's contradictin' me ye wad be, wad ye now?" The tone was menacing.

"Didn't your boss or missus tell you about it?" asked Benjy.

"They told me nothin' at all, and it's gone they are, and ye're a fresh impartinent brat, and if ye don't git right quick I'll—" And here the iron gate creaked ominously.

"You wait an' see what you get from your boss," he retaliated, "when he ain't got no matzohs to-night! It'll serve you right an' him too, for not tellin' you. You'll get it, you red-faced piece o' punkin pie!"

And without waiting for further developments, he reached his partner, and taking hold of their "base of supplies", they carried out a brilliant "strategic retreat."

By the time the two Passover merchants reached the Park, which separates the East from the West—with the idea, perhaps, that "never the twain shall meet"—it was already dusk, and they both re-

alized with a sense of alarm that unless they hurried with all their might they would not reach their homes in time for the Seder and the "four questions". So, thinking they would find a short cut through the Park, they entered upon its highways and byways, and before they knew it they were so entangled in the network of walks, that they were unable to tell if they were walking ahead or walking back.

Both were thoroughly frightened. It was getting dark and darker. Each felt, without confessing it to the other, that no matter how soon they got home now they would arrive after the "four questions." And the mind of each was gloomily fixed on the thought of what awaited him on his arrival.

With a heavy heart Benjy approached a man sitting on a bench and inquired for the way out of the Park. The man, who had been sitting with his elbows on his knees and his head in his hands, raised a pale grey-bearded face.

"De vay oit?" he spoke with a foreign accent. "Ah, my son it is long. You

moost go," he pointed as he spoke, "foist here, un' den dere, un' den like dat."

Benjy's heart sank. He stood still and was ready to burst into tears. In the meantime the sad-faced old man regarded with great interest the two partners and their vehicle.

"Matzohs un' wine?!" he exclaimed. "You hev matzohs un' wine for your Seder? Ah, hurry up, hurry up! It is late."

"'Tain't for our Seder," said Benjy. "We got plenty at home. We was only peddling wid this. But what's the use o' goin' home now? Might as well make a Seder in the Park," he added bitterly.

"Benjy," said Reuby dolefully, "I'll get moidered."

"You're always worrin' about your skin," said Benjy, with deep contempt. "You don' care if you have a Seder or not. What kinava Jew are you, anyways?"

Reuby made a serious effort to realize his higher duty but he failed.

"I'm a good Jew, Benjy," he declared,

"but they'll knock the stuffin' out of us, see if they don't!"

The old man on the bench listened with great interest to the two partners and a faint smile appeared on his drawn face.

Benjy stood perplexed. His usual resourcefulness seemed to have left him. His eyes wandered mechanically to the face of the old man and rested there.

"Why don't you go home to your own Seder?" he asked, as though he had a right to know.

The simple question produced a remarkable effect. The man's head sank suddenly into his hands, and his shoulders rose and fell like those of a man shaken with sobbing.

Something tight and painful gripped Benjy's throat. The alarm and suspense of his situation strained for an outlet, and the sight of the old man's grief opened the flood-gates. Benjy threw himself on his knees near the old man and wailed. And Reuby, needless to say, convinced that his worst fears were to come true, bawled by the side of his partner.

THE OLD MAN REGARDED WITH GREAT INTEREST
THE TWO PARTNERS AND THEIR VEHICLE.

* * *

Strange, indeed, was the scene of this group of three weeping together on the very night when they should be elevated to royalty. Luckily, there were no passers-by at that hour, or the three would have had an unwelcome audience. No passers-by did I say? Surely, Elijah the Prophet must have passed by and seen them, for who else could have inspired Benjy with the wonderful idea which came to him after a while?

Sweet is the intimacy which is born between those who have wept together. The difference in age of sixty years or so between the old man and his new-found friends, seemed to have been washed away by the tears. He spoke to them as to equals, and the story he told them was as simple as it was sad. He was living with his "old one" on the other side of the Park and providing for their meager needs by peddling matches. Before Passover, however, he had caught cold and was unable to leave his home. The result was there were neither matzohs nor wine at home. That morning he had

gone out, promising his wife not to return without those indispensables. He had walked the streets all day hoping vaguely that some good Prophet Elijah would appear and give him what he needed. But the hope was vain; and now, reduced to despair, he had not the heart to go home, and did not know what to do.

Then it was that Benjy was inspired with the great idea.

"Reuby," said Benjy, "we're gonna have a Seder after all. Come on," he continued, turning to the old man. "Take us over to your house. The matzoh and wine in the wagon is for you."

The old man found it hard to understand, and so did Reuby.

"But, Benjy," said the latter, "it belongs over in 52 West. What is Yankel gonna say?"

"Never mind about 52 West. What do they care? They'll never miss it. And about Yankel—well, we'll see about that later. Come on, it's getting late, and I guess your 'old one' must be worrin' her head about you."

The mention of the "old one" roused

the old man from his amazement. He took Benjy by the hand. Reuby followed with the wagon and in a short time they reached the street where the old man lived.

* * *

Through a long, dark hallway into a back yard, illumined somewhat by the lighted windows on all sides of it; into another hallway, where the wagon minus its contents was left behind, up several flights of steps and into a tiny room illumined by five candles on a white tablecloth. A tiny room, but so white and clean! with white little curtains in every conceivable place, on the little shelves above the stove, on the transom above the door, and on the window, of course. So cheerful and smiling was this little room, so childish and grandmotherly all at once!

And when they entered, up rose from a corner near the stove a wrinkled little woman with such a tiny child-like face, her body slightly bent, her head covered with a glossy-black wig. She responded to her husband's holiday greeting and

smiled serenely on the two little strangers.

"I went to look for the Prophet Elijah and I found two Elijahs," explained the old man as Benjy and Reuby laid the matzohs and wine on the table.

"Didn't I tell you!" exclaimed the little woman triumphantly.

And without delaying any longer they all sat down at the table and began the celebration of the Seder. Who asked the four questions? Almost everybody. That is to say, Benjy and Reuby and also the little old woman. She had been accustomed to asking them for so many years! Then the old man sang the story of the Deliverance. And he sang with so much fervor that his two guests were carried away with it. They forgot completely the strangeness of their situation, and Reuby even forgot to think of what awaited him at home.

You should have heard what the hosts said about the matzoh and wine! Never had they eaten such good matzoh! Never had they tasted such good wine! And their praise was not a mere matter of politeness. Is it likely that matzoh and

wine furnished by Elijah himself would be anything but the best? Besides, folks on the other side of the Park, when they do order such things, are not likely to order the poorer sort.

But the guests, too, had an opportunity to praise; for the soup and pudding-balls that the little old woman served up were really marvels; especially when you consider that she had hardly as much meat as any cook will tell you those things need. Is it possible that Elijah the Prophet had something to do with the soup and pudding-balls also?

* * *

The old man accompanied them home when their Seder was over, for the tale they had to tell needed a trustworthy witness to confirm it. Needless to say that, thanks to this witness, sentence on both Elijahs was suspended, thoughReuby found it hard to believe that his well-founded fears were not going to be realized. The entire event began to appear to him strange and almost miraculous.

"Benjy," said he to his partner next

day, "we got away with moider. Let's divvy up now an' see what we can buy with the money."

"What money?" asked Benjy.

"What money?" repeated Reuby, "did we work for Yankel for nothin', or what?"

"You poor boob," said Benjy with pity and contempt. "You think matzoh an' wine don' cost nothin'? The money we made is just enough to pay for what we gave the ol' folks. You oughta be glad you ain't in debt."

Reuby was taken aback. His awe of the miraculous received a rude shock.

"It's all right bein' Elijah, Benjy," he said dolefully, "but it costs too much. I could hardly afford it."

Benjy was thoughtful a little while.

"You're right," said he at last, "It sure is expensive. But just the same, Reuby, take it from me, it's woith all the money it costs."

## BRANCHES IN THE DESERT

"A COUNTRY is this, your America! A desert it is, not a country!"

So declared the Rebbele one night in his little synagogue, after evening prayers.

And when Benjy, one of his listeners, protested, the Rebbele proceeded to prove it.

"Look on all sides!" he cried. "Here we are two days before Shovuos, everywhere else the world is green and the earth smells with sweetness, and here—what do you see? Walls and walls and walls! And pavements, and stones, and clothes-lines and fire-escapes and *bebeches*! A desert, and nothing more!"

"Only this morning," he continued, "I thought Shovuos is coming and the shool should be fitted up with green branches. Why not? A green branch on Shovuos makes the soul rejoice. It brings you all the joy and the beauty of the living Earth. So I went out

looking for something green. Green faces I saw, and that's all. Not a tree anywhere, not a shrub, not a blade of grass! Walls and pavements and clothes-lines, and nothing more! Our Park, you say? Woe to us, for such a Park! It's a Park that is suffering from consumption, poor thing. And even if the policeman allowed it, would I have the heart to take a leaf from that Park? It would be like stealing the last morsel from one who is starving.... Ah, *kinderlach*," the Rebbele mused sadly, "You should have seen my shool on Shovuos in the old country! Like a growing forest it was, and a refreshment to the soul."

The Rebbele's sadness made a deep impression on Benjy, and even the matter-of-fact Reuby felt sorry for the little man.

"Our teacher," said Reuby, "brings every morning to school all kinds o' leaves and flowers and such things. She lives up in the Bronx, in the country. My uncle's cousin moved there, and my uncle told us that he told him that over there—"

"Quit yer speechin'," Benjy slew his

friend's ardor. "You're always showin' off with your uncle's cousin. He's a big *goy*, that's what he is, and he don't know the difference from Shovuos to Yom Kippur. Could you get branches for the Rebbele from him?"

Reuby was completely crushed, and looked it. "It's—it's too far," he muttered.

But before Benjy could enjoy his triumph, the Rebbele interposed.

"Don't quarrel *kinderlach*," said he, "It will have to be this year as it was the last and the years before the last. A Jew, *kinderlach*, must live by his *koach ha-dimyon*, his power of imagination. On Shovuos, if he wants to enjoy green fields and flowers and the joy of Nature, what does he do? He reads the Story of Ruth and he is again in the corn fields of Erez Yisroel. The power of the imagination, *Kinderlach*! The day after tomorrow when you come here for the Shovuos service, we'll just imagine it, and the whole synagogue will be decked out in green branches, and right here, where I am standing, near the Holy Ark, a big

branch of beautiful flowers, fresh with the dew of the fields! You understand, Benjy? You understand, Reuby?"

Reuby stared at the Rebbele with wide-open eyes and mouth, straining to understand, while Benjy looked at him with a mixture of wonder and affection in his shining eyes.

"What was the Rebbele battin' about?" asked Reuby later in the evening when the two friends were alone.

"He was just kiddin' himself, Reuby," replied Benjy, "just kiddin' himself, and that's all. I got an awful big pity on him, Reuby, but I got a plan in my head, and to-morrow we'll see about it."

## II

On the afternoon of the morrow both Benjy and Reuby remained in class after school dismissal, and their teacher, Miss Macy, saw at once by their bearing that they had something important to tell her.

"Miss Macy, teacher," Benjy began, "We got to-morrow a holiday."

"I know," she replied, "and you don't have to come. All the children of the

school will be absent, I suppose, as on other Jewish holidays."

"Miss Macy, teacher," Benjy resumed, refusing to drop his solemn manner despite his teacher's cordial tone, "It's a holiday to-morrow, what we need flowers and branches and such things, and we ain't got none." Thus Benjy came to the point at once. But when Miss Macy looked puzzled, Benjy went right on and explained at great length. And Miss Macy wished to know everything: who the Rebbele was, and just where the synagogue was, and how big it was, and why they wanted branches for it, all of which points Benjy made perfectly clear. Miss Macy was highly interested. The whole thing was so absurdly simple, and so absurdly difficult. Here were at least three people who could be made immensely happy if only there was a tree or a bush or a shrub in the neighborhood!

"Come with me to my home," said she. "In two hours you'll be back with all the branches and flowers you can carry."

"That was my plan," whispered Benjy

to Reuby as they walked with Miss Macy to the station.

But, as we shall see, to carry the plan through was not so simple a matter as Benjy had thought. And this, by the way, is true of all plans made by all men, big or little.

## III

We shall not stop to depict the wonder and delight of Benjy and Reuby when they found themselves "up in the Bronx, in the country," and in Miss Macy's back garden, whence they could look out on large stretches of vacant lots. Nor shall we picture their feelings of pride and joy when they took leave of the happy Miss Macy under big loads of flowers and greenery. Who is there so devoid of the *koach ha-dimyon*, the power of imagination, you know, as not to be able to imagine all that? Nor shall we stop to tell how Reuby, with thumping heart, expected every moment to meet his uncle's cousin, and how he was just bursting to show off about him, but was restrained by the dread of Benjy's implacable ridicule.

"We'll be just in time to fix up the *shool* before it gets dark," said Benjy as they descended the steps of the station where they got off. "Won't the Rebbele be jolly when he sees us, hey, Reuby!"

But before they reached the *shool* and the Rebbele some very unexpected things were to happen. The moment they appeared on the street they created something like a sensation. Even the grown-up folks stopped to look at them, while the little ones—the little girls especially—were simply hypnotized. Before they had gone half a block they had quite a little escort around and behind them.

"Ah, gimme a flower, please!" implored the little girls, tripping along beside them.

Reuby and Benjy only quickened their pace without even deigning to reply.

But their following went on growing, and it began to get harder and harder to ignore it. Reuby, it must be confessed, was not without a certain feeling of pride and importance, but Benjy was becoming uneasy.

"Whoop-ee!" yelled a little crowd of

boys who were playing buttons at one corner, "Look at the walkin' flower-pots!"

"Just like the teachers comin' to school in the mornin,' only more," remarked one of them.

"Must be teacher's pets," put in another.

"Gimme a little flower for my buttonhole, Clarissa, darling!" drawled a third, who was barefoot and displayed just one suspender over his undershirt.

Then another, even bolder than the rest, came closer and plucked ever so lightly at the branches which Benjy was hugging tight with both hands. But the next moment the bold one set up a terrible howl. Benjy had dealt him a vicious kick on the shin.

After that things moved with tragic swiftness. It is unnecessary to record that Benjy and Reuby fought with desperate valor. But the odds were so greatly against them, and the treasure they had to defend so exposed. Besides, that very treasure, by tying up their hands, hindered its own defense. But

many were the sharp kicks that fell on bare shins that day.

Even the little girls turned against them. They swarmed around them and plucked and chattered like so many gleeful little sparrows. And the work of their tiny hands was destruction, and they left behind them desolation like a swarm of locusts in the shining fields of the East.

"Break through and run!" gasped Benjy to the breathless Reuby, and they broke through with a huge effort and ran, still hugging the pitiful remnants of their green and glorious treasure.

The enemy gave chase, but since the distance to the *shool* was small, they managed to escape and rushed into the little synagogue where the Rebbele was making preparations for the evening service. He stopped and gazed with affright at the two red and scratched faces, and at the little bundle of poor, almost leafless twigs which they laid before him.

"They were all green and beautiful, Rebbele, and Reuby had a big bunch o'

flowers—but—but——" and Benjy's voice broke, and he sat down on a bench and shook with sobs. And Reuby stood beside him and raised up his voice and wept with so much noise and relish, that after a while Benjy couldn't stand it.

"Aw, shut up, can't you?" he said to his comrade. "One would think your uncle's cousin moved back to Cherry Street by the way you bawl!"

"*Kinderlach*," said the Rebbele, taking up those twigs and stems, "I don't see what you are crying about. How big is our shool, anyhow? We have plenty of branches! Just watch me and see! And besides," he continued as he bustled about, laying out those twigs on the gas jets and shelves, "Aren't we going to read the Story of Ruth to-morrow? And what's the use of having such a beautiful story if you have no *koach ha-dimyon*? We'll just use our imagination, and those twigs will become cedars of Lebanon, and those stems will bloom like roses of Sharon. You understand, Benjy? You understand, Reuby?"

And, by some strange influence Reuby

felt greatly consoled, and stopped weeping. And Benjy looked at the Rebbele, and felt a tug at his little heart. He would have liked to put his arms around him and kiss the bearded face.

"Benjy," said Reuby to his friend later in the evening, after the service, "Was the Rebbele kiddin' himself again?"

"No," said Benjy, "this time he was only trying to kid us, and he did it to you, all right, all right," he added with characteristic ruthlessness.

## IV

What still remains to be told can and shall be told quickly, but it is, none the less, of the utmost importance. For next morning, a little after nine, the Rebbele's shool was the scene of an astounding event.

At that particular time the reading of the holiday portion of the Law was going on inside, and Benjy and Reuby sat outside on the stoop, silent and mournful, still thinking of yesterday's battle and defeat; when suddenly they lifted up their eyes and saw advancing toward

them—no, you couldn't guess it in an age!—their teacher, Miss Macy, and three of her colleagues from the school! The school, you see, had no children that day, so the teachers could make excursions. But, what is more important, they each carried huge bunches of branches and flowers!

Benjy and Reuby rushed forward to meet them, with thumping hearts.

"When you left me yesterday," explained Miss Macy, "I thought you didn't have enough, so I called up my friends here and asked them to bring an extra lot of flowers and branches this morning. Can you use them? Here, take them! And can't we see how nice your synagogue looks? And why are your faces so scratched up?"

"Miss Macy, teacher," Benjy began, suffering and blushing cruelly; and with great difficulty he managed to convey the events of the day before.

"In that case, Benjy," said Miss Macy, patting him on the head, "Take these and decorate your shool with them and we'll come to look at it some other time."

And Benjy and Reuby brought the flowers and branches to the shool in triumph, and laid them before the Rebbele in the sight of the whole astounded congregation.

"Rebbele," said Benjy roguishly to the little man later in the day, "Ain't it too bad you don't need to use your *koach ha-dimyon* after all?"

The Rebbele's face beamed on his little friend.

"Ai, are you a loifer!" he said to him, and brought the little head to his bosom and pressed it close.

"Whadje say to the Rebbele?" asked Reuby.

"This time, Reuby, I was kiddin' him," replied Benjy.

## HOW YOKEL LEAPED TO FAME AND FORTUNE

"I TELL you, Yokel, you are a fool if you don' do it," insisted Benjy. "You have a chance to make a fortune. Fifty cents a bundle they will pay you. And you can bring a hundred bundles in your wagon, and sell them all. Everybody around here has a Succah and is got to have a bundle of rushes for the roof, no?"

"But suppose we go out for the rushes and get lost on the way?" queried Yokel the expressman. "I was never out there before and you weren't either."

"It is a cinch, Yokel," answered Reuby.

"Ah, children," sighed the expressman, "but my horse, woe is me! Will he be able to stand such a journey? Just look at him, the carcass!"

Benjy looked at Yokel's horse which was standing head down, lost apparently in the sad thoughts and memories of

old age. Yokel's horse was of no particular color, and remarkable for the number of bumps all over its body. Most of those bumps were just protruding bones; some of them had a different origin and might be compared to so many callosities developed in a life of tedious toil.

Benjy gave the horse a resounding slap on the ribs.

"He'll never die," said he. "You've got him yourself ten years and he was old when you bought him."

"He's all I've got," said Yokel sadly.

"Listen to me, Yokel," began Benjy earnestly. "This morning the Rebbele says to me: 'It's a shame! We'll have to use hay and straw to cover our Succahs. No rushes! A Succah without rushes!' An' he was awful sorry about it. 'Last year,' he says, 'Getzel brought rushes from New Jersey, but now he has his own stable and is too proud to bring them. And Yokel,' says the Rebbele, 'is a *shlemiel*, just stands next to his wagon and munches hay like his old horse.'

"Business is bad," explained Yokel. "What can I do?"

"Why don't you open a stable like Getzel?" suggested Reuby.

Benjy gave his friend a withering look. "Ai, have you, Reuby, got a head for business!" exclaimed Benjy. "You'll be a banker yet on Canal Street. Listen to me, Yokel," he turned to the expressman, "'If only he would go out and bring in the rushes,' the Rebbele said, 'I could get every member of the *shool* to buy a bundle from him. He could sell a hundred bundles and make fifty dollars in one day, and all the Jews would bless him!'"

The big expressman opened his eyes wide, and his mouth just watered.

"Fifty dollars!" he repeated.

"And you would earn a *mitzvah* in the bargain," urged Reuby. "Come now, what do you say? We got to start tomorrow morning very early."

And before the two friends said good night to the big child-like Yokel, he, of course, had said "Yes" to Benjy's irresistible urging; and it was agreed that early next morning, which was the day before *erev* Succos, the three would

start out and cross to the swamps and waters where the reeds grow and the rushes wherewith to cover the booths of the Children of Israel.

## II.

The sun, bright Lord of the Day, whose mighty rule not even the highest tenement walls are able to abolish, was only just beginning his struggle with those dark challengers of his power, when the four heroes of this story—Benjy, Reuby, Yokel and his horse—not to speak of the wagon, started out on the difficult road which leads to fortune. Even the horse seemed to feel the importance of the journey—his steps seemed brisker than usual. Brisker, but not brisk enough for Benjy.

"Show him the whip, Yokel," he advised. "We got a long day's work ahead."

But Yokel wouldn't hear of it.

"Have you got a heart in you, Benjy?" he demanded. "Ain't he got a hard day's work, too? He ain't a lion!"

"That he ain't a lion, you don't have to tell me," answered Benjy, looking

ruefully at the horse's bony buttocks, jolting up and down in the shafts.

"Some horses," Reuby dogmatized, "are even stronger than lions."

"Ours is stronger than a dead lion, anyhow," Benjy consoled himself.

To give a full account of all that our heroes saw and felt that day would be almost impossible. It was one of those days which are never forgotten. Even the ferry ride was unforgettable. Benjy and Reuby stood on deck near the railing, fascinated by the wonderful spectacle: the dark blue waters, all aglitter in the morning sun, through which the boat crashed swiftly and proudly, flinging the waves aside and dashing into spray those that dared to resist her; the other boats, big and little, gliding swiftly hither and thither, each one seeming bent on some glad and wonderful errand: the shores, the huge piles of the one receding, the piers and structures of the one approaching, their outline becoming clearer and clearer, until they could see men and horses moving about as on a huge stage.

The horse, in the meantime, was placid-

ly munching his oats, and his owner, just as placidly, was munching his bread and cheese of which he had taken along a large supply, in anticipation of a full day's requirements for himself and his companions.

Much less fascinating was the ride through the city and on to where grew the rushes. It took them much longer to get there than they had anticipated. They had to stop and ask the way several times, and they had considerable difficulty in making people understand what it was they wanted and what sort of place it was they desired to reach.

By the time they arrived, the poor horse was becoming wobbly, and his feet seemed to be getting entangled one with the other. With fatherly solicitude, Yokel unharnessed him and put an extra ration of oats into his nose-bag before he and his partners set to work.

The work, too, was much harder than they had imagined. Luckily, the huge muscles of Yokel's arms and back seemed endowed with inexhaustible strength and energy, and the rushes continued to pile

up underneath his scythe. Once Benjy who, together with Reuby, was tying up the bundles, said to Yokel admiringly:

"Say, Yokel, if I was as strong as you, I wouldn't have the heart to let my horse pull my wagon, I'd do it myself."

"You're too smart, Benjy, my child", was Yokel's retort. "Better hurry up, it's getting late."

It really was quite late by the time they were ready to start on the homeward journey. Yokel's poor "steed" had considerable difficulty in pulling the now heavy wagon on to the road. Yokel himself had to apply his back to the tail-piece.

Once in the road, they went ahead, slowly but smoothly.

"Yokel," said Benjy, "tomorrow you will be a rich man, and the Rebbele and all the rest will thank you and bless you."

The vision of wealth loomed big and bright before Yokel the expressman. With laborious calculation he figured out exactly how he was going to use this wealth. You know the fable of the farmer-girl who was going to market car-

rying a basket of eggs on her head, do you not?

The road took an upward slope and the horse suddenly stopped. Yokel prayed and threatened but without result. So he, as well as Benjy and Reuby, alighted and pushed from behind. By dint of the hardest kind of pushing and shouting they managed to reach the top of the slope. The road was now level, so they got on again. But Yokel's horse refused to budge. Instead, he continued to stand in the shafts and strong tremors passed over his body. Then, suddenly, his forelegs gave way and he sank to his knees.

With a cry that was almost a sob, Yokel jumped off again, and swiftly unharnessed his horse. With much heaving and coaxing he succeeded in raising him to his feet again. But there was something about the way the horse stood and tottered that struck panic into Yokel's heart. Yokel was no novice when it came to horses. He became frantic. He took the loaf of bread and tried to make the horse eat some of it. But the beast

refused to open its mouth. Suddenly, it sank to its knees again and lurched over to one side. A sharp shiver ran through its body and legs, and then it lay perfectly still.

Yokel's horse had breathed his last, and was now gathered unto his equine fathers.

It would be too affecting to describe the sorrow and lamentations of poor Yokel over his terrible bereavement. The sorrow was deep, though the lamentations were rather uncouth. Also, Benjy and Reuby stood for a while mute with wonder and fear over what had happened.

"It's your fault," said Reuby to Benjy finally. "Last night you said he'd never die. You gave him an *einore* (Evil eye)".

Benjy for once did not retort. His mind was too busy thinking of the awful plight in which they were now placed. It was beginning to get dark, and there they were, perfectly helpless, with a loaded wagon on their hands.

"Yokel, my friend," said Benjy soothingly, "What's the use of crying like

that? Your voice sounds like a *shofar*, but it won't do you any good. First of all, we have to get the wagon and the horse out of the middle of the road, then we have to think up some way of getting home."

It took some time before Yokel could be roused up to do something. But his mood took an abrupt and surprising change. He conceived a sudden rage against the poor beast. What right did it have to die in the middle of the road and leave him in that plight? Couldn't it wait until they got to the stable? It always was a miserable, good-for-nothing beast! He always knew it would come to a bad end!

And when Yokel was in that mood his natural strength seemed to increase tenfold. The problem of getting the wagon and the horse out of the middle of the road, though a difficult one, was solved.

Branching out from the main road directly opposite them on one side was another, narrower road. On the other side, the main road continued on a rather high embankment. What with the two

roads meeting, Benjy expected traffic and help sooner or later.

But the vehicles that passed were disappointingly few. And their occupants could give them advice but no help. And the advice was that Yokel should go back to the city where he was known, hire another horse, come back and take home his load. In view of the hour—it was now dark—it was impossible to proceed on that advice. Yokel lighted a lamp, hung it underneath the wagon and so the three continued in sadness and silence.

"Yokel," said Benjy some time later, "Let us lie down in the rushes and go to sleep. Tomorrow we will see what we can do."

But Yokel did not answer. He was asleep already. Such was the man that was Yokel the expressman, as strong as a bear, and as simple as a child.

## IV

The sun, bright Lord of the Day, had no rivals where our heroes were now; so he rose up the next morning, *erev-Succos*, and ruled with all the pride and

glory of an undisputed monarch. And they, our heroes, except for the one that, alas, would never rise again, also arose, and surveyed their great misfortune. There seemed to be nothing else to do, so Yokel made ready to proceed alone to the city. They all realized that it was now impossible for them to reach the city with the rushes in time to sell them.

"Take good care of the wagon, children," said Yokel. "It's all I have left, woe to me."

"Don't be afraid, Yokel," answered Benjy. "Nobody will steal it. Thieves are no fools."

"Yokel!" cried Benjy, suddenly. "Look! What is that?"

Benjy pointed towards the branch road opposite them. In the distance a cloud of dust was moving with tremendous swiftness towards them. A minute later the tattoo of galloping hoofs and loud, frightened, human cries made themselves heard. Then, as the thing came nearer, they made out clearly what it was.

In a light vehicle, a buggy, were two

women, and one of them was standing up and straining with all her strength at the lines. But the horse was clearly beyond her control. He was tearing along with mad speed, his eyes bulging out of his head with panic, and if he did not crash into Yokel's wagon, he would be sure to leap right over the embankment.

Yokel took in the situation with a glance. He emitted a bellow like an ox, and flinging off his coat, he placed himself just where the two roads met. Yokel had done those things before and he knew how to do them.

Before the frightened animal could set hoof on the main road, Yokel leaped forward and seizing the bridle with both hands, he gave the horse's head a powerful tug to one side, and forced it to turn down the road instead of rushing on to the embankment. His mad career thus suddenly broken, the horse stopped short, jerking his head fiercely up and down, and rearing on his hind legs in an attempt to release his head. But Yokel held fast. The horse was not yet born that

could force its bridle out of Yokel's powerful hands.

Gradually the animal ceased its struggling and seemed to realize that it was mastered. Then Yokel, still holding the bridle with one hand, stroked the animal's forehead and neck with the other, and spoke to it in tones of surprising tenderness. The horse stood still, and only an occasional tremor ran through its body to testify to the terrible emotional crisis it had undergone.

But the emotional crisis which the two occupants of the buggy had undergone was no less terrible. For some time, one of them was hopelessly hysterical. Yokel ordered his two little friends to unharness the horse as quickly as possible and he walked the animal up and down slowly, still soothing it with his hand and voice.

When he judged that the horse was completely restored, he made ready to harness him again. Then the two women approached him, and grasped his hand, and told him again and again that he had saved their lives, that he must let them

reward him, that they were rich, that he could ask for anything he liked. But Yokel didn't know what to reply and only looked uncomfortable.

Then Benjy got an idea. He stepped forward and explained to the two ladies the unfortunate fix in which their savior found himself.

"If we could only get a horse," ended Benjy, "to take us to the city before dark, we could sell the rushes and Yokel would make fifty dollars and would be able to buy a new horse."

"A horse for fifty dollars," exclaimed the ladies incredulously.

"The other cost me thirty-five," explained Yokel.

Then the ladies got an idea. They insisted that Yokel receive from them, as a reward, their own horse. All they asked of him was to drive them to a certain place a short distance away, where they would telephone to their home for another horse.

It took some time for Yokel to understand. And even after he returned, leading the handsome horse by the bridle—

the ladies insisted that the harness must go with the horse—and all the time he was harnessing him to his wagon, and, in fact, all the way home, Yokel was like a man in a trance.

"He is a lion, Benjy," he kept repeating. "Just look at him, a regular lion."

"Yokel," answered Benjy, "you are even more like Samson the Strong, than the horse is like a lion."

* * *

Of course the rushes were all sold to grateful customers, and the story of how Yokel got a new horse, "a regular lion," became the talk of the neighborhood. In fact, Yokel, and by reflection, Benjy and Reuby, became so famous, that the Rebbele invited all three for *Kiddush* in his Succah beneath the rushes brought by Yokel's "lion."

## SINS UPON THE WATERS

UNMINDFUL of the varied noises of the street, Reuby was seated on the curb, his feet resting in the gutter, engrossed in the thrilling occupation of torturing a large dragon-fly. Suddenly the insect was knocked out of his hand and, spreading its long gauzy wings, it flew away out of sight. Looking up, Reuby saw Benjy standing over him with Napoleonic attitude and scowl.

"What do you want from the poor bug?" demanded Benjy. "Did he do you anything?"

"I was feedin' 'im with flies, Benjy. You ought to see 'im eat the flies. He opens his mouth wide like a peanut-bag an' then you can watch a fly sliding down inside his tail."

"What do you got to the flies then?" Benjy shifted his point of attack. "That makes two sins on you; one for the stingin'-bee and one for the flies. You surely

ought to go to *Tashlich* on Rosh-Hashonoh."

"What for? What do you mean?"

Benjy's face endeavored to assume an expression several degrees below contempt.

"You dunno what *Tashlich* is? When you go to the water and throw all your sins in?"

"Oh! You mean when the Jews go to the dock and the Irish throw stones at 'em?"

"Well? What do you suppose they go for? To get the stones? But listen, Reuby. This time I know one of 'em ain't gonna throw no stones, an' that's Jimmy Carney."

"Jimmy?" Reuby was incredulous. "G'wan, if 'e don' throw none, the others won' throw none either. He's the leader."

"Well, I seen 'im already, an' I told 'im if he does, I'll smash 'is face for 'im.'

"An' what did 'e say?"

"He says he'll do what 'e likes, so I'm gonna be on the dock an' look out for him."

"But 'is whole gang'll be there."

"Never you mind 'is gang. Will you be there?"

"O' course, Benjy." Reuby looked down dubiously at his multicolored toes.

"Now, I'm gonna see the other fellers. Believe me, Reuby, leave the bugs alone. It's a pity on 'em. An' then, what's the use o' gettin' sins on your head. Rebbi says if you do it extra it wouldn't even help you to go to *Tashlich* with them. So be careful Reuby an' remember!"

## II.

By the waters of the East River they stood and said *Tashlich.* Here and there, an old woman, perhaps, wept also. But the day was warm and clear, the river rippled and sparkled, and the sirens called and answered each other in shrill, glad notes. In spite of the weekday bustle about them, those who came on the dock to perform the duty of *Tashlich* were clothed not only in holiday garments but in holiday spirits as well.

Separated from the wharf on which they stood by about fifty feet of water, was another wharf, encumbered with

barrels and boxes and surrounded by a number of tugs and barges. A gang of longshoremen was at work on it with hook and truck.

Benjy, looking odd and uncomfortable in a suit of holiday clothes, was standing together with a number of his followers, looking warily towards the shore, and almost certain by this time that Jimmy would keep away.

"Look!" said Reuby suddenly, pointing to the opposite wharf.

A number of barefooted, bareheaded urchins were seen running in and out among the barrels and boxes. At the same instant a stone, weakly thrown, fell into the water near the dock where stood the group of men and women saying *Tashlich.*

Benjy stood up on the edge of the dock and made a trumpet of his hands.

"Come on out Jimmy, you sneak, an' I'll lick you like I said," he shouted.

In answer another stone splashed right beneath Benjy

He continued:

"You think I dunno why you got on

that dock? 'Cause you can hide your dirty face behind those boxes and barrels so we can't hit you back."

"An' the men that work on the dock will chase us if we go for you!" added Reuby.

Another stone fell short near them.

"Come on out, Jimmy, an' show your face!" shouted Benjy.

This last challenge seemed to have hit the mark. A thin, ragged, barefooted youngster stepped to the edge of the opposite wharf right above the nose of a tugboat that lay alongside. Jimmy—for it was he—raised his right arm as high as he could to swing a stone he held in his hand. As his arm shot forward, his body seemed also to be carried forward, and losing his balance, he fell over, struck the tip of the tugboat and tumbled into the river.

## III.

At the sound of the splash, Jimmy's comrades appeared on the edge of the wharf to see him swim to shore. They knew that Jimmy was a good swimmer,

but none of them had noticed that as Jimmy fell he struck the boat alongside. They waited for him to rise.

But Benjy who had seen how Jimmy fell, knew what his failure to appear meant. Leaving his comrades, he ran with all his might to the neighboring dock, flinging off his coat on the way. He zigzagged swiftly through the cases and barrels, jumped to the edge of the wharf and then down to the tug. The next instant he dived head first into the river. A loud shout arose from both docks.

It seemed a terribly long time before he appeared again. But Benjy, who was the best diver and "fetcher" along the docks, located Jimmy beneath the exact spot where he saw him fall, and brought him to the surface. As he held the unconscious form about the neck and swam with him to the tug, he spoke to him:

"There, now, Jimmy; don't be afraid. I got you. Just let me hold you. I'll bring you back. Don't be afraid. That's the boy, Jimmy!"

He reached the tug and clung to one of the wooden fenders that hung at the

water-line. The next instant several pairs of strong longshoremen's hands were held out to him, and he and his burden were pulled up to safety.

One of the barrels was turned over and Jimmy was stretched across it, face down. They pressed his chest and stretched and bent his arms. In a short while Jimmy began to breathe again. In the meantime the ambulance that had been sent for, arrived. The doctor, after restoring the unconscious Jimmy, bandaged a deep gash on his head. Benjy refused to go away to change his clothes.

"G'wan!" he said. "I'm almost dry already. An' then, don' I have to wear my good clothes to-day? It's a holiday."

He stood by and watched the doctor work over Jimmy. He felt strange and confused and looked at poor Jimmy anxiously.

As soon as Jimmy opened his eyes, however, and sat up, Benjy was as though shaken out of his former feelings. He looked around and saw Jimmy's followers standing together at a distance

and casting covert glances at him and their leader.

He approached the doctor.

"Say!" he asked, "will Jimmy be all right pretty soon?"

"Oh, yes!" replied the doctor. "You are the lad who saved him, aren't you? He'll be all right in a day or two. Don't worry, my little man."

"I do worry," replied Benjy. "I want him to get well quick. It's very necessary."

"Why so?" asked the doctor, curious.

"Well," replied Benjy, "you see, I promised to smash his face for him an' I got to do it."

* * *

"Benjy," said Reuby on the way home, "why didn't you stay behind an' throw your sin in the water?"

"What sin?" asked Benjy.

"Do you think feedin' stingin'-bees with flies is a worse sin than divin' off the dock on Rosh-Hashonoh?" demanded Reuby triumphantly.

And poor Benjy, wet and bedraggled, cheated out of his foe, and now charged

with a heavy sin, kept silent, not knowing how to reply.

It was only later, when he had laid his sad case before the Rebbele, that his troubled soul was enlightened and consoled.

# FEIVEL THE FIDDLER

## HIS LEGEND OF JUBAL

THE memories of my childhood! How faint and shadowlike they are now! Like wraiths of smoke floating in the sky they fade and vanish, and leave behind them only a trail of sadness and sweetness.

But, are they all like the mist? No, thank God! A few there are so deeply rooted in my soul, they are like fixed stars; and one or two, instead of fading, seem to grow in lustre as the years glide on, seem to gather new meaning with the experience of life.

And the deepest memory of my childhood is of Feivel the Fiddler! Let me tell you of the first time I met him.

We had just moved to a new apartment, three little rooms in a tenement on Madison Street. In the evening—it was a hot evening in the middle of July—

I went down to explore the new cellar, and hearing music quite near, I went looking for it, and soon found myself in the back yard. It was a remarkable scene which I came upon! The back yard seemed to be full of children, dancing and laughing children, and in their midst sat a tall, grey-bearded man, playing on a violin. And the music he played was so fast and joyous and irresistible, that before I knew it, I found myself among the throng of children, dancing away like the rest of them.

When the player stopped and the children all flocked around him, I examined him more closely. His fine grey beard, straight nose, smiling lips and dark eyes had a charm both kingly and child-like. His head was always slightly bent to the left as though listening attentively.

"More, Feivel, more!" cried the children.

But the player looked up and must have seen that the summer twilight had changed to dusk.

"Enough!" he said, putting his finger

to his nose and shaking his head, "You have danced enough!"

Then he sat down on a soap box and began to play something which brought a sudden hush. And as he continued, I became aware that it was night, that the stars were shining down on the tenements and that all was peace and sweetness and melancholy.

Most of the children were gone when he ended, and the few who remained were silent.

"Feivel," spoke up one little girl, "My mother says there is such a kind o' magic in your fiddle. Is that true?"

"Not in his fiddle," one of the boys answered, "in his fingers."

"But I read in my fairy-book," insisted the girl, "about a fiddle that could play all itself and it made everybody to dance."

"It's all bluffs!" the boy asserted boldly. "There ain't no such fiddles."

"*Kinderlach*," said Feivel, "Don't quarrel. Listen to me and I'll tell you about a wonderful instrument almost as old as the world. It was made by Jubal himself."

"Who was Jubal?" some one asked.

"A Jewish child not to know who Jubal was!" exclaimed Feivel in a mock tone of anger, bringing his finger to his nose, and shaking his head in a way that made us all laugh. "Jubal, as you will find in your Bible, was 'the father of all such as handle the harp and the pipe,' and that means he was the first musician that ever lived.

"Now, Jubal, you must also know, was a descendant of Cain, who had killed his brother Abel, and whose awful crime had broken the harmony of the world and brought great misery to the children of men. When Jubal was born, God said to Himself: 'I will now give to the children of Cain and to all other men some thing which will restore the harmony of the world and purify all hearts of the bitterness and evil which is in them because of Cain their ancestor.' And God sent down music from Heaven, and He commanded Jubal to fashion instruments of music of all kinds, harps and organs, psalteries and cymbals, and play them in the ears of men that their hearts

might fill with harmony and love. And Jubal did so. He played on his instruments, and the hearts of men were filled with harmony and love while he played. But when he ceased from playing the old wickedness returned.

"And Jubal cried aloud unto God: 'Behold, my music hath not sufficient power!' And God answered: 'It is because of the imperfection of thine instruments. Wherefore, cease from playing, and give up the remainder of thy days on earth to the fashioning of a perfect instrument which shall fill the hearts of all men with harmony and love forever.'

"And Jubal betook himself to a forest and lived there and worked with the tools of brass and iron which his brother, Tubal-Cain, had given him. And no one knew of his abode. Jubal worked for fourscore years and made many instruments, but when he played on them he knew they were still imperfect, although their music was very beautiful. But one day he played on one, and behold! there came to his abode the beasts of the forest

to listen. The lion came and the wolf and the hare and the stag. And the music made all the wild beasts even as lambs. Then Jubal knew that it was the perfect instrument which would have the power to fill the hearts of men with harmony and love forever.

"But when he had ceased from playing, Jubal died. His body was buried tenderly by the beasts of the forest, but the instrument remained in the cave which had been his dwelling, and no one has been able to find it to this day."

This was the legend that Feivel the Fiddler told us that night. How did that legend come to him? I have since asked myself. For I know it is not in the books.

"When will the instrument be found?" asked one of the children.

"Some say," answered Feivel, "that David had that same instrument when he played before Saul and drove the evil spirit from him. But when Moshiach will come, he will find it and play on it, and then there will be harmony and love in the hearts of all men forever."

Then we were all silent, and each little heart among us fluttered with a strange and wonderful emotion.

"Nu, *kinderlach*!" Feivel's voice suddenly rang out, "Are you all asleep? Home! Home!" and he got up and played us a tripping little ditty, leading the way out of the back yard.

Such was my first meeting with Feivel the Fiddler; and even without my further acquaintance with him, that alone, I think, would have been enough to make him one of the glowing memories of my childhood, a fixed star in that misty firmament.

## TWO WEDDINGS

WHAT was the secret of the deep love that all of us children had for Feivel the Fiddler? In those days, of course, no such question troubled my mind. But, as I think back on it now, it seems to me that Feivel was himself a child, that his soul, instead of altering and hardening with the tribulations of life, had, by some miracle, remained the soul of a child, and that, to its native sweetness, the lapse of years had only added mellowness and strength. Was it the power of music, I wonder, that wrought that miracle?

When he came, or whence he came, not one of the tenement dwellers seemed to know. All that I can tell you is that he used to roam about among the air-shafts and back yards, a flock of children always at his heels, and play his violin. And at night he used to come back to his lodging, which fortunately

happened to be in the same tenement where I lived.

Then, supper being over, our own back yard became the scene of those unforgettable meetings and concerts. First music, and dancing; then stories and legends. Tucked away in that little nook, with the huge, black, tenement walls looming all about us, we used to gather close around the beloved fiddler, and he, with the magic of his music or tales, would fill our child souls with wonder and beauty. I cannot, of course, convey to you the joy and charm of his music, but some of his stories I can repeat even now.

"When I was a bit of a youngster of no more than twelve or thirteen," he told us one night, "I used to play the fiddle in Motel Klezmer's band. I wasn't very happy in those days, not only because I was an orphan, but also—would you believe it?—because I played too well. It's queer, isn't it? that one man should dislike another because the other plays better. Yet that was just the reason why Beryl Baraban disliked me. Beryl once played the fiddle himself, but since my

coming Motel had put him to the drum. I did have one friend among those players, and that was Tevyeh Trompait who played the cornet. Tevyeh was an old man, a dear old man, and I think he really loved me.

"Motel Klezmer's band, you must know, was famous far and wide, and the richest men in the towns round about used to engage us to play at their daughters' weddings. We led a wandering life, of course, and, on the whole, I liked it well enough. Motel was a very strict master, and I'll confess to you that I stood in great fear of him. Not that I never played any pranks, only when I did, I used to pay for them very dear. But I had to play them. There has always been a jolly little devil inside of me.

"Now, I am going to tell you about the biggest prank I ever played on Motel and his band. Yes, I paid for it dear enough, but am I sorry? No, I could do it all over again with the greatest pleasure.

"This is how it happened. The richest man in the town of Kazimirka was cele-

brating his daughter's wedding, and we, Motel Klezmer's band, were there in all our glory. It was a rich and splendid wedding. Every guest wore a new suit of clothes and the ladies rustled their silk gowns, and shook their diamond earrings, and minced and smiled. The hall was large and beautiful, and was lighted by more than twenty hanging lamps. I counted them, so I know.

"I played my best. I said to my fiddle: 'Come, now, fiddele, let's make them jolly and happy, and they'll thank you and me.' But—would you believe it?—nobody paid any attention to me or to my fiddle or to the band altogether. And in those days—child that I was—I liked to be noticed and praised. So, after a while, I became gloomy, and I said to my fiddle: 'They don't care for us, fiddele mine; they only care to show off their clothes and jewels.'

"In the room behind us were gathered many beggars and paupers who had come to the rich man's wedding; for that, you know, was the custom. Rich men used to provide on such occasions a

special meal for the paupers of their town, and even for those who came from other towns.

"Suddenly I feel some one pull my sleeve from behind. I turn round and see before me a little girl of about eight or nine with such a sweet face and such big sad eyes, that my heart began to melt and my tears began to well up. That's how I was in those days—my heart was too soft.

"'Listen, come here!' says the little girl to me, pulling me by the sleeve into the poor folk's room. 'Come with me, come to my house! It's my sister's wedding. Shaike Fiddler is sick, and we have no music. He promised to come but he fell sick. And my sister, she cries, she only cries! Please, please, come with me! What are we going to do? My sister only cries, and my mother, oh! oh!' And the little girl sits down on the floor and bends over, and cries, and breaks my heart all to pieces.

"I rushed back, took hold of Tevyeh Trompait's sleeve, and pulled him into the next room.

TEVYEH AND I LOST NO TIME. WE PLAYED AND PLAYED.

"'Come, Tevyeh,' said I to him, 'Take your cornet and come with me.' And he, dear old soul, obeys me without a word.

"We stole out of that grand house, and followed the little girl for more than half an hour over the darkest streets and crookedest courts until we came to her home.

"The little girl rushed in like the wind.

"'They're here! They're here!' she screamed, and fell on the bride's neck.

"Tevyeh and I lost no time. We played and played, and hardly stopped for a minute between the pieces. And you should have seen them dance! After a while they stopped dancing, and just crowded around us to listen. How I played! 'Come, fiddele,' said I, 'These people love us. Let us make them happy.' And, at the end of one piece, the bride—what do you think she goes and does? She throws her arms around my neck and kisses me on both cheeks. Ah, *kinderlach*, how I loved her! And everybody and every thing in the whole world!"

Feivel the Fiddler paused for a moment, and his eyes half closed, and his

head leaned over to one side, as used to happen whenever he played something especially moving.

"Well, *kinderlach*," he resumed, "You will never guess what happened. We had been there, Tevyeh and I, for quite some time, two hours, perhaps, when the door opens and in comes—who do you think?—Beryl Baraban!

"How did he get there? Oh, they must have made inquiries among the beggars, who had seen us leave with the little girl, and Beryl traced us in that way.

"'So, I've found you, my fine fiddler!' Beryl cries. 'And you, Tevyeh, old fool! You'll catch it, both of you! Such a scandal! To leave Reb Todresel's wedding and come here!'

"I looked at the clock and I saw that it was still too early for the guests to go. My little devil was up and, besides, I knew I'd catch it anyway. So I took my fiddle and I played. They all became so quiet I could hear them breathe. I played and played and nobody seemed able to move, not even Beryl Baraban!

I had my revenge! Beryl stood before me as if turned to stone.

"How long I played I don't remember. But when I finished I saw it was time for the guests to go. So I put away my fiddle and said to Beryl:

"'Come, now, Beryl. Motel Klezmer must be waiting for you.'

"And when we arrived, Motel, sure enough, was waiting for us. And, of course, we caught it, all of us."

"Beryl, too?" asked one of the children.

"Yes. Tevyeh, simple old soul, told Motel how Beryl, instead of making us leave at once, had stood like a block of wood and waited until I had stopped playing. So Beryl Baraban caught it also."

And by the tone of his voice, and the sparkle of his eye, it was easy to see that the child soul of Feivel the Fiddler was as hugely amused and pleased over that charming adventure as we, the little ones gathered around him, were ourselves.

## HARMONY TRIUMPHANT

WAS Feivel the Fiddler really a great musician? Would his playing have the power to thrill me now also, after the years had, as they say, "refined" my taste? I don't know. But I do know this: that Feivel's soul was the soul of a great musician. To him the world was one vast harmony. And, I suppose, that is why he always seemed wrapt and inspired—like the great Psalmist to whom the universe was the glory and harmony of God. Do you recall that marvellous vision of universal harmony in one of the Psalms: the heavens, and the earth, and the waters confined by the mighty Hand; the beautiful order of day and night; the teeming life of birds, beasts and fishes, and "man going forth to his labor until the evening",—all the creation of the Spirit? Well, I know that Feivel was often haunted by the same kind of vision, except that in him it all became translated into the harmony of sound.

We were gathered around him in our back yard one night when his mood was more than usually serene and profound. One of the little fellows gave a glowing account of a wonderful choir he had heard in a synagogue, "where you had to pay fifteen cents admission." Someone else at once claimed that a choir he had once heard "couldn't be beat." Others joined in, and the dispute was growing loud.

"Hush, *kinderlach*," said Feivel in his low, even voice. "It's too dark to talk so loud. But your dispute reminds me of one we once had in Motel Klezmer's band where, as you know, I played the fiddle. There the question was as to which was the greatest orchestra that the world had ever known. Just listen and you'll hear something about this greatest band.

"Beryl Baraban told us that he once had the good fortune to be in a certain town through which the Czar was passing, and there he had heard a band which was the biggest and finest that could be imagined. Motel Klezmer him-

self said he once heard the orchestra in the biggest theatre of Moscow, and that people who hadn't heard that band ought to keep quiet. But Beryl insisted that it stood to reason that a band which played for the Czar couldn't be surpassed. Whereupon Motel told Beryl to go to the devil with the Czar together.

"At this point old Tevyeh Trompait, who played the cornet, coughed very loud to attract attention.

"'Foolishness, all foolishness!' said Tevyeh. "That Jews should quarrel about such a thing! Don't you know that the mightiest orchestra that was ever in the world was the one that King Solomon had in the dedication of the Temple?'

"'Good morning!' says Beryl. 'Here comes Tevyeh Trompait, the great scholar!'

"But Motel says: 'Go right ahead, Reb Tevyeh, don't mind the Baraban.'

"And old Tevyeh went on and told us of the wonderful dedication ceremony, the singing Levites arrayed in white linen, with their cymbals, psalteries and

harps, the Priests sounding their trumpets, all making so beautiful a harmony in praise of the Eternal that His Glory descended in a cloud and filled the entire Temple. Dear old Tevyeh's face shone as he spoke, and as for myself, I felt such a stirring within me that I couldn't stay in one place.

"Those days, I remember, I was more than usually miserable. I was still a youngster, no more than fifteen or sixteen, and I had no real friend except Tevyeh Trompait. Beryl Baraban, on the other hand, was my bitter enemy and used to invent a hundred different ways of annoying me. I found myself hating Beryl Baraban with all my heart.

"That day we were on our way to play at a certain wedding, and we stopped to pass the night at a village inn. The guest-rooms were all crowded, so a number of us, myself among them, went to sleep in the barn. Behind the barn, I noticed, there was quite a big stretch of forest.

"How thoroughly wretched I felt as I lay in the hay-loft trying to fall asleep!

I felt that in my soul it was darker than the darkness that surrounded me. Underneath me I could hear the soft snorting of horses, and I thought how good it must be to be a beast and not to feel how wickedly the harmony of God's world was being spoiled by people like Beryl Baraban. Strange that they should do so, isn't it?"

Feivel the Fiddler looked up beyond the dark tenement walls, and his deep gaze lost itself among the stars. What thoughts and feelings, I wonder, were then moving in his simple and tender old heart?

"Well, *kinderlach*," he resumed, "I don't know just what happened. I could never explain it. I was dozing and waking and dozing again, and thought I would soon be asleep, when I suddenly found myself in the moon-light, with the most wonderful sounds ringing in my ears. The moon-light was strange, so white and strange, it made all things look like the things of a totally different world, and it made the top of the forest shimmer like a sea of silver. And from somewhere

in the forest there came to me, as I said before, strains of music, playing and singing, that sounded like the very angels before the throne of God.

"'This,' I said to myself, 'I heard this before!' And then I knew it was the band of Levites and Priests at the dedication of King Solomon's Temple, calling down the Glory of the Eternal by their harmony. And I went forward into the forest to find them where they were. I walked and walked, I don't know how long, and all the time I was as though lifted off the earth by a feeling of joy and peace and love that filled me even as water fills a well.

"Well, *kinderlach*, they found me next morning in the forest fast asleep, and how it all happened I couldn't, as I have already told you, explain. They told me it was all a dream, and that I had walked in my sleep. But the music, the music of the Dedication, I had heard, and it was still ringing in me when they awoke me. So what does it matter to me that they call it a dream? And what is more, I seemed to have gotten a new spirit. I

no longer felt as I did in that hay-loft. And for a long time afterwards not even the persecutions of Beryl Baraban could make me unhappy.

"Such, *kinderlach*, is the power of the music they played and sang in the Temple."

## THE BEGGARS' FEAST

IT MAY surprise you if I tell you that Feivel the Fiddler, the man whose soul could move so deeply and devoutly, stands out in my memory to-day, after the lapse of so many years, as the ideal Bohemian. It was only in his rarer moments that we children caught glimpses of his profoundly religious nature. For the most part Feivel was, so to speak, our boon-companion, the comrade of our fun and pranks. In his stories he spoke to us more than once of the "jolly little devil" he had in his youth, but I am sure Feivel never grew old, and that his little devil remained young with him.

Needless to say, we loved to hear about this "jolly little devil," and sometimes to see it still working. But the story that gave us most delight, and which we used to make him repeat with as much detail and ornament as possible, is the one I shall try to repeat now, with-

out attempting, of course, to render all the drollery that he used to put into it. For Feivel, you know, had his fiddle with which to adorn his tale, and I have only my poor memory.

"There was once a time—now would you believe it?—" Feivel told us, "when I was the master of a band like Motel Klezmer. Of course, I was then no mere youngster, but a big, strong fellow, as merry as a bird in the woods. I cared mighty little if business was good or bad, and to provide against the time when it was bad,—well, we used to get extra portions of provisions at the weddings where we used to play. Never mind, most of our weddings could well afford to provision us, because there was no better band in those parts, and the richest families would engage no other for their celebrations.

"Well,—why should I tell you a lot about my fortunes? I'll come straight to the story. One fine morning I get a letter by post from a town more than fifty miles away, asking me to come and play at a wedding, offering the best

terms imaginable, and enclosing money for the journey for the entire band. I could scarcely believe my eyes. Why, I asked myself, couldn't that man get musicians nearer his own town? And who could he be that he should go to so much expense in order to get my band? But I concluded, in the vanity of my youth, that my fame must have reached his ears and that, being very rich, he was willing to spare no expense in order to have me.

"I made no further inquiries, and on the appointed day we arrived at the railroad station of that town. As soon as we got off the train I felt there was something queer. People pointed their fingers at us, smiled to one another meaningfully, and shook their heads. I caught, also, some of the remarks they passed.

"'Look! Yoshe Kamtzon's musicians!'

"'He got them, didn't he, the pig!'

"'They're no better than he, I guess.'

"I saw at once that something was wrong.

"'Come here, little brother,' I beckoned

to one fellow. 'Tell us why people point their fingers at us.'

"And this is what I learned. Yoshe, or Yoshe Kamtzon, as he was called, had the reputation of being the meanest miser in the town. When he came to hire musicians for his daughter's wedding, they all refused to come unless he was willing to prepare a beggar's feast, as was expected from every rich man. Yoshe refused the condition they all imposed. The whole town, therefore, had looked forward to the pleasure of seeing Yoshe's wedding without music. But Yoshe, anxious to avenge himself on the local musicians and on his townspeople, had loosened his purse-strings and hired my band.

"You can imagine how I felt on learning these things. My first impulse was to turn right around and tell Yoshe and his wedding to go to the devil. My second thought was that to do so would be to treat him too well. For my blood was up, I felt deeply insulted, and I made up my mind that Yoshe would pay me dear.

"'Are the beggars in town?' I asked my informer.

"'What a question! They have come from miles around to see Yoshe's wedding without music.'

"'Well,' I said, 'Just pass the word to them to be all there. Tell them that I, Feivel the Fiddler, am their friend. Come on, *Chevreh*!' I turned to my assistants, 'Yoshe Kamtzon is waiting for us!'

"We arrived, and Yoshe gave us a joyful welcome. His little pig's eyes shone with what I thought was a malicious joy. The guests were arriving and so were the beggars. But the latter, of course, remained outside, prowling about the street and court-yard.

"I started off my band and we played one 'piece' after another with the finest dash and finish. Yoshe continually looked through the window and was beaming all over.

"The evening drew on, the canopy had been set up and taken down. Yoshe's daughter was now a married woman, and

the dancing which comes before the grand feast was in progress.

"'*Chevreh*!' cried I suddenly to my men, 'The cat is sick!'

"You should have heard what followed! Such a dreadful moaning and meowing and whining as would terrify an elephant and move the heart of a camel!

"Every dancer in the hall, man and woman, stood stock still. Outside a howl of delight rose up among the beggars.

"Yoshe Kamtzon ran over to me, his face as white as a sheet.

"'Reb Yoshe,' said I to him in my gravest tone, 'There is something wrong somewhere. My band, you must know, is no ordinary band. That's the way my band behaves when there is someone in the neighborhood who is hungry.'

"He was a shrewd old rascal, was Yoshe Kamtzon! He looked at me, and I saw that he read my thoughts to the bottom. Then he looked at my men and saw them as stolid as posts, waiting for my orders. In short, he saw himself completely at my mercy.

"He grinned a pitiful grin and said:

"'Wonderful! Wonderful! How did your instruments know it? Of course, the beggars outside must be hungry. Tanchum!' he suddenly yelled, and an old servant appeared trembling before him. 'Why don't you call in those beggars for their feast? Isn't it time?'

"'But, Reb—Reb Yoshe!' stammered the servant.

"'What are you reb-yosheing about?' yelled Reb Yoshe; and then he took the servant aside and whispered to him.

"It didn't take long before I heard a shuffling and jostling in the neighboring room, and I knew the beggars were coming in for their feast. So I resumed my playing, and we played, *kinderlach*! Since my band was a band it never played like that.

"Suddenly someone pulls my sleeve. I turn round and see a beggar standing before me.

"'Feivel,' says he to me, 'The soup is like water, the bread is a month old, and there isn't enough meat for a dose of medicine.'

"'*Chevreh*!' I cried to my men, 'The dog is gone mad and is biting the cat!'

"God in heaven! You should have heard the crazy babel of barking and growling and hissing and caterwauling! I was almost frightened myself!

"Well, *kinderlach*, need I tell you that those beggars got decent soup and fresh bread and plenty of meat? What a feast they had! Old, experienced beggars told me afterwards that never in their lives had they had the like before.

"And then, later, my band adjourned to the beggars' room and we played and they danced, and I danced with them, and there never was such a jolly lot of beggars in the world before. Believe me, *kinderlach*, it was not Reb Yoshe's celebration at all, it was the beggars' much more than his. Yes—and mine, too, for in all that jolly company I am sure there was no one jollier than myself."

## THE GREAT DEPARTURE

CLEARLY as I remember that night in the back yard when I first saw and heard Feivel the Fiddler, that memory is overshadowed by the great event of his disappearance. Whence he had come and whither he went no one seemed to know. He flashed into our drab tenement life like a comet from unknown spaces, bright and joy-bringing, and vanished as mysteriously as he had come, leaving behind him a glowing trail of tradition and memory. I never heard him speak about himself, and once when some one asked him about his kith and kin, he pointed to his fiddle and then to us children and answered:

"Enough for an old man, no?"

One night Feivel the Fiddler did not show himself to us, his *kinderlach*. We thought that strange, and since it was August and vacation time, we decided to wait for him next morning when

he started on his rounds among the air-shafts and back yards.

There was something unusual about his appearance the next morning. I don't remember whether his clothes were different, but there was a new expression in his face, something excited and elated and sad all at once.

"Ah, *kinderlach*," said he, "You are coming with me? Then come!"

We followed him and he began his rounds. But he seemed to be in a great hurry, and stayed but a very short time in each place. And the various things he played all seemed to have the same quality. They were wistful and yet hopeful. It was odd to see the windows looking down on us suddenly fill with faces, to see their expressions sadden or brighten with the tones that came from Feivel's fiddle, to see the looks of surprise and disappointment when he put back his instrument into its wooden case after a few minutes' playing. It was easy to guess that something important remained for Feivel to do that day, but

none of us could imagine the strange event that lay in store for us.

Our numbers had increased considerably, and at the end of about two hours we were quite a troop at Feivel's heels. We must have presented a strange appearance, barefoot, most of us, with brown and soiled legs and dressed in the scantiest clothes.

Having finished his rounds, Feivel seemed to hesitate and looked at us oddly.

"*Nu*," said he, "My day's work here is over." Then, suddenly, and in a loud voice:

"Come, *kinderlach*!" said he, "Follow me! I'll play you the last dance!"

He walked to the center of the street and began to play. The children all gathered round him and before we knew it, we found ourselves dancing. Older people stopped on the side-walks and stamped lightly to the measure, where they stood. Others appeared leaning out of windows, beating time on window-ledges with their hands. And we, the children in the middle of the street, hopped and skipped, singly and in pairs,

jostled and collided, and must have seemed gone mad with delight at the swift and merry playing of Feivel the Fiddler.

Then Feivel started off, playing as he walked, with the whole throng of us at his heels. That was the strangest procession those streets had ever seen. Children came flocking, whooping and screaming, out of every alley and hall-way, and joined us. Little ones tore themselves away from mothers, who had no choice but to follow the fiddler with their babies. Men and women stopped on the sidewalks and gaped at us with astonishment and pleasure.

At one corner the big white-haired policeman, who had been on our beat for more than twenty years, looked at us suspiciously and began to saunter toward us. I was afraid our grand frolic was over, but Feivel marched right on and continued his playing. Then all of us, with one accord, gathered around the genial old guardian of the peace, made a wide circle and danced around him. His face turned red with pleasure and embarrassment, and

when Feivel gave the signal to march on, we left him at the same corner, looking after us with a broad smile on his big face.

And our wonderful procession moved on, now with slow swaying movements, now skipping and hopping, always obeying the magic fiddle. We came to the scraggy little park at the end of the street, crowded upon a piece of ground that had once been covered with grass, and there we formed another great ring and danced around with Feivel in our center. Round and round we whirled, now in one direction, now in the other, until I began to feel that our movement was becoming slower, and as though suddenly, we found ourselves, with our hands still clasped together, standing perfectly still. What had happened?

Nothing, except that the music had changed. It was no longer swift and merry dance music that Feivel was playing, but something slow and mournful, which gripped our hearts like some fear. We stood around Feivel with a sense that something great was about to happen.

Gradually the spirit of the music

changed, it became less mournful, stronger, more hopeful, and so beautiful we almost held our breath. I do not remember how long Feivel continued in that strain, but after it, came low caressing notes, full of tenderness and peace, serene as a summer twilight.

Then came the supreme moment. Feivel stopped playing, put away his fiddle and remained looking at us in silence. We, on our side, were silent with expectation. Then he said simply:

"Farewell, *kinderlach*! May you be always happy."

And he turned and walked off towards one of the side streets which opened from the park. Then, for the first time that day, I noticed that he had a little bundle slung on his back.

After a few moments of surprise we all moved forward to follow him. He turned round quickly and held up his hands, looking at us with his deep eyes, and smiling and shaking his head. He said not a word, but we all understood and stopped. We understood that Feivel had played us his farewell.

Since that day I have neither seen nor heard of Feivel the Fiddler. But I like to believe that he must have gone away somewhere else only to bless other children with the charm of his music and his tales. For I find it impossible to think of him without his *kinderlach.*

After these many years, of course, Feivel's music is no longer heard on this earth, but is it not certain that it still lives in the hearts of "his children?"

# PHANTASIES

## THE SWORD OF THE SPIRIT

And it came to pass, after the Temple was destroyed and Jerusalem laid waste by the sword of the Roman, that many of the youths of Judæa who were strong of heart and stout of limb banded together against the might of the conqueror. And they swore a solemn oath before the God of their fathers, saying: "As long as there be breath in my nostrils, so long shall my hatred pursue the Roman. Like the vulture of the air shall I be and like the lion of the field, and my prey shall be the Roman; yea, even unto the time when the prey shall devour the seeker."

And when they had thus spoke, they fled to the mountain fastnesses of Judæa and to the forests and waste places thereof. By day they hid in the caves and secret places of the mountains, and they fell upon the Roman by night. Like the leopard, swift and cruel, they followed after the foe, and sprang upon him even

when he felt most secure. But when the Romans felt sorely harassed they sent after the men of Judæa their footmen and horsemen, who searched them out and put them to the sword. Howbeit, the oath that the men of Judæa swore before the Lord, they kept with all their heart and strength.

Now it chanced that among those who fled from Jerusalem by the hidden ways beneath the ground after the ruin of the city, were two young warriors of the followers of John of Gischala. And the name of one was Eliezer and the name of the other was Simeon. And the two youths clave unto each other with great love, even as David and Jonathan.

And Eliezer said unto Simeon: "Let us haste and join us unto our brethren in the clefts of the mountains, that we may continue to fight against the Roman even unto the hour of our death, for lo! the glory of the Lord is ashes and the stronghold of His people desolation." And Simeon answered, saying: "So be it."

So the two youths fled northward, and when they came to a certain place be-

tween Ramah and Gibeon, they found among the rocks of the hills a cavern which they knew in the days of their childhood. And when they stood in the mouth of the cave, lo! it was even as their hearts had foretold them. For some of the warriors of Judæa came forth to meet them from the bowels of the cavern, even of those who had sworn the oath of hate upon the Roman. And the two youths dwelt with the men of Judæa two months and nine days.

Now it befell afterwards that the Romans were informed of the whereabouts of those men, and they came down against them with a great host of spearmen and bowmen. And they fell suddenly upon the warriors of Judæa, and smote them with the strength of their weapons. And few were those who escaped and fled to the wild haunts of the forest.

And among those who fell that day was Eliezer, the friend of Simeon; but Simeon himself escaped and took refuge in the forest.

## II.

And when Simeon was alone in the forest in the drear of the night, he lifted up his voice and wept, for that the friend of his heart was slain with the sword. And he cried unto the Heavens, saying: "Oh God of my fathers who art grown deaf to the wailing of my people, hear me now, I pray Thee! Let me not linger on while the corpse of my people lies bleeding in the land. Behold, I am as the drift-wood cast forth by the waves from the wreck that is swallowed. Even as a twig am I, flung from the oak that is reft by the bolt of the lightning. Wherefore then shall I live, since the land is the prey of the spoiler, and the People is slain with the sword of lasting destruction?"

And it came to pass when Simeon had spoken these words, that he heard a moving in the branches of the bushes that were near him. And he said in his heart: "Now hath the Lord granted my prayer, for He sendeth upon me a beast of the forest to devour me." Howbeit, when

the bushes parted their branches, there came not forth a beast, but the shape of a man. And the man was hoary with great age, and his eyes shone like stars beneath his hanging brows. And Simeon was seized with great wonder and stood as one amazed.

And the old man came near unto Simeon, and he took his hand and said: "I have heard, my son, the words that came from thy lips in thy great sorrow, and I have come to bring thee comfort." And Simeon answered, saying: "Tell me first, I pray thee, who art thou and wherefore wanderest thou in this forest alone?" And the man said: "Even as thou art so am I; for I have fled from the face of the foe, who spareth not the old with the young. And I have lived in the forest for many days, eating the roots of the earth for food, a brother to the fox and the raven. And I have spent my days in brooding and my nights in seeing visions. And now thou passest through the forest, O man of Judæa! Tell me, I pray thee, of the things that have come to pass among our People."

And Simeon made answer and said: "Speak not, I beseech thee, of our People, for it is no more. For the young men thereof are slain with the sword, and the maidens and the old men, and the matrons and the little ones, are sold into bondage. For the Lord has taken away His mercy, and the strength of the People is departed utterly. How shall we stand up against the might of the Roman?"

"How?" said the old man. "Surely, not by the might of the sword!"

And the man sought for a sign that should show unto the eyes of Simeon the meaning that lay in his heart. So he came near unto a tall sycamore tree which grew between two rocks. And he bent down and seized the sycamore's trunk, and strained as one in great toil. And he spoke, saying: "Even as my feeble strength cannot uproot this tree, so shall the sword of the People be utterly weak against the Roman. But, shall the People die because its sword is broken? Lo, not by might nor by sword but through My spirit, saith the Lord!"

And Simeon made answer and said:

"Is not the spirit of the People broken even as its sword? Therefore is my soul weary unto death."

Then the old man answered and said: "Give ear, my son, to the words of my mouth, for meseems I am to you even as a messenger from the Most High.

"Put away thy sword and spear, for the Lord hath given into thy hand a stronger weapon. Turn thy face westward to the Great Sea, even to the town of Jabneh. Go there and sit thee down at the feet of Jochanan, the son of Zakkai, of him who counselled peace but not submission. For it has come to mine ears that the men of wisdom and faith have foregathered about him, to nourish the drooping spirit of the People that it may live. And they have established a new Temple, even a school for the study of the living Law. Thus, by great vision the People shall live, and not perish."

And when Simeon heard those words a great peace decended upon his soul, and he knew that the Lord had spoken to him by the mouth of the old man. So he

turned and said: "Old man, even as thou hast spoken so shall I do, and the Lord be with thee and me?"

And the old man embraced him and kissed him, and Simeon set forth on his way.

# IN QUEST OF MOSHIACH

## I

THE moonless sky was all aglitter with multitudes of stars, and the face of the river heaved with trembling bands of white and yellow light. The swift rushing of the river past the piles and barges was heard below the edge of the wharf, where sat, huddled together, Harry and little Davy. From the park far behind them, the voices of young and old, the barking of dogs, and the muffled rumbling of an occasional vehicle reached them in a half-unreal haze of uniform sound. On the wharf not far behind them rose the melancholy tones of a Russian melody sung by some of Russia's exiled children.

"And did little Rebbi say," whispered Harry, "when will come Moshiach?"

"He might to come any day," little Davy whispered back. "He's only wait-

ing and waiting till all the Jews'll be good and pious."

On the river in the distance there suddenly appeared, glorious and fairy-like, a vision of light. It blazed from the three decks of the excursion-steamer, speeding away to regions of bliss, and shimmered on the answering waters. Several broken strains of music arose in the night to lose themselves among the stars.

"And what'll he do first of all when he comes, Davy?"

"Oh, Harry, dontche know?" said Davy dreamily, his eyes fixed on the dwindling vision of the boat in the distance. Suddenly the sound of the boat's siren, far away and prolonged, reached their ears.

"First of all," Davy began, "he'll stand up and blow his horn so all the bad ones'll be frightened and they'll all die, and all the good ones'll be glad. Next of all, all the good ones in the cemeteries will stand up from their graves. And then, little Rebbi says, Moshiach will build one bridge all out of paper and another one all out of iron. And the

good ones'll come over by the paper bridge all safe and happy, and the bad ones'll try to come over by the iron bridge, but it'll break under 'em and they'll fall in and be drownded."

"I'd have afraid to go on the paper bridge, Davy."

"Oh, Harry, you're a bad one sure," and little Davy shook his head gloomily.

"No, I ain't," Harry protested, "didn't I knock Looky's tooth out for calling little Rebbi names? Only why couldn't we go on the iron bridge, Davy? it's better'n paper any time, believe me."

"No, no, Harry, you don't understand," sighed Davy, watching the last beams from the steamer fade in the darkness.

"Davy," whispered his friend, "where'll they come to when they cross the bridge?"

"To Jerusalem," was the answer, "and everybody'll sit down an' eat only honey and drink only milk."

Harry gave a big gulp.

"You know, Davy, he ought to hurry up. There's such a lot o' Jews go hungry these days—little Rebbi, even."

"Little Rebbi says he ought to be

coming these days. Nobody knows, he might to come tomorrow if he wants to."

"And what'll he look like, Davy?"

"Like a king, says little Rebbi. Tall and strong, with his eyes all shining and his hair black and long."

"Like Samson who killed all the Philistines, eh, Davy?"

The singers of mournful Russian melodies had departed, and the sounds from the park were growing fainter and fainter. The water swished dreamily against the piles and barges below the wharf where sat the two little comrades.

Suddenly a heavy step was heard and the light of a lantern jumped out of the darkness. Simultaneously, a gruff voice rang out:

"Ye still here, ye haithen brats,—Git, or I'll braik yer shins for yer!"

Harry and Davy jumped up and ran down the wharf. Before departing, however, they turned and hooted at the night watchman.

"Mugsy McGoo-ook! Mugsy McGoo-ook!" they cried; and then having assured themselves of the desired effect

from the threatening growl that came in reply, they fixed the time and place for their morrow's meeting and disappeared in the maze of narrow streets.

## II

On the morrow, the midsummer sun sparkled on the face of the river and made glorious even the aspect of the few scraggy trees and sparse patches of grass that went by the name of Waterside Park. At the further end of the park, away from the river rose the tenements, the windows and fire-escapes displaying an array of linen and bedding dazzling in the sunlight. There was a ring of gladness in the shrilling of the sirens, the clatter of trucks and the rhythmic calls of a band of longshoremen at work on the wharf.

Along one of the sun-heated walks of the park strolled little Davy and Harry, both fresh from a swim, their faces and bare legs absurdly clean, swinging their tights above their heads by the strings, "dead-rat" fashion.

"Davy," said Harry, "did you hear

about it? The fellers say there is a new crazy come to the park and hanging around. There's gonna be lots o' fun."

"Little Rebbi says it's a sin to have fun with the crazies," declared Davy. "Sometimes a crazy is a great *Zaddik*, only people don't know it."

"There's been a lot of 'em coming aroun' the park, just the same, Davy. First of all they come, and stay aroun', an' next they go away an' nobody knows where. The fellers say the cops take 'em away and put 'em in the bughouse."

"That's because the fellers don't leave 'em alone. They oughta have more pity on 'em, that's what."

At this point the two friends broke off their conversation and started at a run towards one of the benches around which a group of urchins were assembled. The group was in constant motion, and to judge by the variety of sounds that emanated from it, something interesting and joyful was in progress.

"What's the matter?" asked the friends as they arrived.

"The new crazy!" came the delighted answer.

On the bench, and forming the center of the group sat a shabbily dressed individual, his well-formed neck bare, a dented derby on his head. His hair was jet-black and reached almost to his shoulders. His face was framed in a short fluffy black beard. His features were striking for their regularity and beauty, especially his eyes, which were large and shone brilliantly but mournfully.

"You let 'im alone Blinky, d'ye hear?" shouted Harry to one of the urchins who was tickling the strange individual with a twig from behind.

Davy made his way through the crowd.

He stood a moment in awe before the solemn-faced stranger.

"What's your name?" he finally asked.

"Moshe Moshiach!" came the reply in a deep voice.

Little Davy stepped back as though frightened, and at sight of him the others stopped their clamor.

"Listen, ye Heavens, and I will speak,

and let the Earth hearken to the words of my mouth," began the stranger, speaking loud and fast and gesticulating. "How long will the people pine in exile and the Children of Men be steeped in iniquity? The heavens cry aloud for help and the earth moans in her misery. Why does the Czar drink blood and his ministers eat human flesh! Lo, I have come to lead you away; I will build a bridge for your feet and a shelter for your head, and the land shall flow with milk and honey. I will put the trumpet to my lips and the deaf shall hear me; for know you who I am? Moshe Moshiach is my name!"

As the man spoke his aspect became almost terrifying. His eyes flashed, his nostrils trembled, his face became transfigured. Little Davy was spell-bound. He understood little of what the man said, but he understood enough.

"Harry", he whispered to his friend, "Did yer hear him, Harry? He says he's Moshiach!"

"Ye—es," came faintly from Harry.

Then Davy ventured almost in a whisper:

"Where do you come from, Moshe Moshiach?"

But the man now looked sternly on the ground and made no reply.

"What are you doing here?" Davy again inquired. But the man remained silent. Then, after a pause, he began solemnly:

"The birds fly to their nests in the trees, and the fishes swim to the clefts of the rocks. Where are the ravens that fed the Prophet Elijah? They've become vultures, and now they devour his flesh. But I will seize them and slay them, they shall die at the sound of my trumpet. For the fat are greedy for blood and my people are lean."

"Davy," whispered Harry, "I think he says he's hungry. Let's take him away and get him something to eat."

"Come with us," said Davy, "if you are hungry."

And the man rose and took Davy's hand.

"Let us go," said he. "It is time."

And the group of urchins, vaguely

impressed and puzzled, looked after the tall straight figure receding with slow dignified steps, flanked by Harry on one side and by little Davy on the other.

## III

Into a narrow back yard, cramped in by the high walls of the tenements, Davy and Harry conducted their guest; for could they risk the wrath of unsentimental mothers by introducing him into the house? Reverently Davy invited him to sit on an upturned soap-box, while Harry ran off to fetch food.

Soon Harry returned with the food, consisting of half a loaf of black bread and some onions, which he had to snatch away stealthily. The guest fell upon it with marvellous avidity, swallowing great mouthfuls without seeming to do any chewing at all. And while he ate the two hosts held a whispered consultation.

"Harry," declared Davy breathlessly, "he looks just like little Rebbi said."

"Yes, an' he knows all about the milk an' honey," confided Harry.

"And he ain't no crazy," continued Davy.

"No, he's only hungry," agreed Harry, "but what'll we do with him, Davy?"

Little Davy seemed worried.

"I tell you," said he, after thinking a moment, "first we'll tell little Rebbi all about it. He'll tell us what to do. An' you know what, we'll let little Rebbi see him and talk to him. And then we'll know for sure."

"Right you are, Davy. We'll take him over as soon as he's through eatin'."

"No, no, Harry. We mus'nt take 'im to Rebbi's house. I am afraid of the Rebbi's wife. She might holler fierce about it. I'll bring little Rebbi to see him."

"Where? in the yard? wid all the wimmen looking on?"

"No, Harry, not in the yard. On the dock, to-night, that's where. I tell you: you take care of him—while I'll go and tell Rebbi. An' to-night, when it's dark you bring him on the dock. Little Rebbi an' I'll wait for you. Then we'll know for sure."

"Look how 'e eats, Davy; I wisht I had to give him some honey instead of black bread and onions."

"He looks just like a picture of King David I seen in a story-book, Harry."

"An' he kin speech somethin' great, eh, Davy?"

"An' he looks also like the lost Prince in the Violet Fairy Book."

"Ask 'im about the bridge, Davy, an' about the horn."

"No, no, let's leave 'im alone. Little Rebbi'll ask 'im all about that."

"I think I better bring 'im some more bread, Davy."

And Harry disappeared and soon returned with more bread and onions.

"Now, Harry, you stay here wid him, an' I'll go an' tell little Rebbi."

## IV

The blue of the twilight sky and the green of the river were growing deeper, and the bands of light, broken and trembling, lengthened on the face of the water. In the west, between the chimney-stacks of the flour mill, one large white star was

growing more and more luminous with the fading of the sunset glow.

The bustle of work had long ceased on the wharf where stood waiting Davy and his Rebbi, a remarkably thin little man, the expression on his face like that of a happy child.

"Oh Rebbele," murmured Davy, clasping the little man's arm, "soon you will see him. He looks like a young King, tall and strong, with his eyes shinin' and his hair black and long."

"Yes, Davele, but you must be calm. Remember, I promised to come with you only on condition that you calm yourself. How excited you are!"

"But you oughta hear 'im speech, Rebbele! He makes with 'is hands; an' his eyes, oh my! they just stick you through."

"Yes, yes, I'll see him, I'll hear him, now just sit down here, Davy, and be quiet."

Then, after a pause:

"Rebbele, Harry says he'll walk better on the iron bridge. Ain't he a fool?"

"Yes, yes, he can't see, he can't feel

as much as you, child. But tell me, when is he coming? It's getting late."

"Soon, soon, Rebbele. You mustn't go away. You must see him."

"But suppose, Davy, he is not the real Moshiach?"

But Davy looked at his Rebbi with wide open eyes and made no answer.

"You must know, child," continued the little Rebbi, "that there have been lots of false Moshiachs, who came only to do us harm."

"Ah! but wait till you see mine!"

"But even if yours should also turn out false, you must still promise to believe and hope that the true one will come. Do you promise, Davy?"

"Oh, Rebbele, I don't know, I don't know what you mean. Do you mean I must look for another one?"

"Yes, you must always believe that the right one will come."

"Yes, yes, Rebbele, I believe, I believe. But wait till you see mine, wait till you see mine."

The sky was now thick-strewn with myriads of stars. In the distance moan-

ed the sirens. In the various nooks of the wharf human shadows, silent and mysterious, became visible. The tones of a melody, soft and sweet, chanted by one of Russia's exiled children, arose in the night.

"It is getting late, Davy."

"Oh, Rebbele, why don't they come? I am so afraid."

"Oh, they will come. Be sure Harry will come."

And Harry came. He came alone, breathless and excited.

"They took him away!" he panted, "The cops, they took him away. I was comin' along with him, Davy, just like you said, an' all of a sudden he stops, and he looks at me fierce—my! but I was scared. And then he begins to speech and to make wid his hands. An' all the people on the street, they come aroun' and they holler an' they laugh. An' he just goes on, Davy, louder and louder, and there was a big crowd. And then two cops come along and they took him to the station-house. I went along behind, and after a while, an ambulance

from a hospital came, an' I saw they put him in. And the wagon went off. Davy, I guess he must have been a crazy, after all!"

But Davy made no answer. He stood listening to his friend, white and motionless. And when Harry had finished, he turned suddenly to his Rebbi, flung his arms about the little man's neck and hid his face on his bosom.

"Oh, Rebbele, Rebbele," he wept; and the cries of the anguished little soul mingled with the song of the Russian exiles, and the softened din of the teeming tenement-world behind them.

# THE SAVING LIGHT

WE KNEW that grandmother would tell us a story that night. We could see it in the reminiscent smile about her lips and in her eyes which reflected the mellow light of the Sabbath candles she had just lighted. So we stood silently around and waited. But still she did not begin.

"It's going to be a long one," said little Davy gleefully. "Takes a long time to think up."

"What I am thinking of," said Grandmother, "is not the story itself. I am only wondering if I ought to tell it in the past tense or the future."

"What's that?" queried Davy.

"Wait till you go to school," put in Gussie, "and then you'll know. That kid wants to know everything all at once."

"Well, Grandma," Davy came back, "I don't care how you tell it. What's the difference?"

"You are right," answered Grandma, "there really is no difference—none of any great importance, anyhow.

"So then," she began, "Once upon a time the sun and the moon and the stars became totally dark. They no longer gave out any light at all."

"I hope they had matches and gas and electric lights," said Davy.

"They did," Grandma replied, "but it did them no good, because when the sun became dark all other lights gave out also. So the world became wrapped in darkness and sorrow, and the children of men were seized with a great fear and wept bitterly in their grief.

"Now in a certain city there lived an old man whose soul was wise and whose heart was good. All his life he had lived alone because he could find no other good and wise man like himself in that city or anywhere else. And this old man now sat alone in his poor home wondering at the strange thing that had befallen the earth, and praying for knowledge of its cause. And very soon he heard a Voice, a very soft Voice, answer-

ing him out of the darkness. It seemed to come from near, from so near that he thought it came from the very place which he occupied. 'Know, thou, Son of Man,' said the Voice, 'that mine eyes have become weary of the useless and wicked lights of the earth. Why should the sun, mother of light, continue to serve them and shine on their folly and sin?'

"'Oh, Voice!' answered the good man, 'were all the lights of the earth used in the service of folly or sin? Were there not some that men used to light up their toil?'

"'True,' answered the Voice, 'But the aim of their toil was vanity or greed.'

"'Were there not some which men used to gladden their hearts with and cheer their drooping spirits?'

"'True, but they became drunk with its brilliance and committed folly and sin.'

"'Were there not some that were lighted for a token of holiness?'

"'True, but the holiness was not of the heart, and the lights were a mockery.'

"'Oh, Voice, terrible, pitiless Voice,'

cried the good man, 'Were there not some humble and pure lights, howsoever few, which burned in token of the peace and holiness that dwelt in the heart?'

"And the Voice answered and said:

"'True, and those lights have not been extinguished. They are now burning and shall continue to burn.'

"'Oh, Voice,' prayed the good man, 'Give us back the sun. How shall the children of men ever redeem themselves without the sun?'

"'Have they not failed with it?' asked the Voice.

"'With it they may perhaps redeem themselves, without it, how can they? Have mercy on the joyless hearts of men.'

"'Speak not to me of mercy. I am Justice!'

"'Have mercy on the mothers who grope for their children!'

"'I have spoken.'

"'Have mercy,' wailed the good man, 'on the children who see not the love in the faces of their mothers, the children whose deep wondering eyes are now large with terror. Did I say mercy? No, you

owe them justice! The children you owe justice! They are sinless!'

"Then the Voice for a few moments was silent. And when it spoke again it said:

"'Son of Man, your last words have moved me. For the sake of the sinless ones the sun shall be restored. So hear me now, Son of Man! To thee will I give special guidance, and thou shalt go forth and travel over the face of the earth and seek out those lights which are still burning, and from that one of them which is purest and humblest and holiest the sun shall be kindled again.'

"So the good man offered up a prayer of thanks, and put on his girdle and took his staff and went out into the darkness. From all sides, cries of anguish came to his ears, and wherever he went he heard men wail.

"'The sun! the sun! Who will give us back the sun!'

"And after he had wandered for a long time, he came to a place where he could feel that the streets were narrow and crooked, and there he saw a feeble light.

So he hastened forward with great joy, but when he came to the spot his joy vanished. For he saw a corpse stretched on the ground and at its head burned a light.

"'This is a holy light,' thought the good man, 'and now the sun shall be rekindled.'

"But at that moment the Voice came to him and said:

"'Resume thy quest, Oh Son of Man! Shall Death be the bringer of Life?'

"So the man left the dead and went out to seek further. And after wandering a long time through the crooked and narrow streets, he perceived another light which seemed to issue from somewhere beneath the ground. He hastened toward it and when he came to the place, he saw a pale young man bent over a book, and above him glimmered a tiny lamp.

"'Here,' cried the good man joyfully, 'is a humble light in the service of life. Now surely shall the sun be kindled again!'

"But at that moment he heard the Voice which said to him:

"'Son of Man, thy search is not yet ended. The knowledge that moves the mind is good, but Life is not that knowledge alone. Further seek!'

"And the old man continued to wander through the darkness. And after he had wandered a long time he became weary. No light shone anywhere to greet his search. So he sat down on the pavement of the city and wept.

"'Behold!' said he, 'I am weary. My feet will bear me no longer. Oh, Voice, relentless Voice, now wherefore hast thou sent me on this vain quest? No more will the sun shine on the earth. There is no light which is humble and pure and holy enough to rekindle it.'

"'Cease your wailing, Son of Man!' he heard the Voice cry to him. 'Get thee up and go forth! Seek until thou shalt find!'

"So the good man lifted his head into the darkness, and as he did so a light appeared and seemed to beckon to him. As he rose up he felt that new strength had

come to his limbs. So he walked on and on and at length he reached that light.

"There were, in fact, not one but two lights, and they burned from two candles stuck in two shining candle-sticks. And sitting beside these two lights and looking at them, was a little woman with a face that was old and wrinkled, but oh, so beautiful, so tender and beautiful! Peace and holiness shone from her face like two stars in the mellow of the setting sun.

"'The Sabbath candles!' exclaimed the good man. 'At last!'

"'At last!' echoed the Voice.

"And as the echo died away, two beams from the Sabbath candles began to lengthen, to reach quickly through all things until, like two thin pillars of fire, they seemed to touch the sky itself. And at that very instant the western sky became suffused with a mellow radiance, a holy and peaceful radiance, in the midst of which gleamed two white stars.

"The sun was setting—for it was Sabbath eve— but its fading light gave holy promise of a sunlit morrow. The sun was now kindled again."

* * *

When Grandmother finished the story, she and all of us sat looking long at the Sabbath candles.

Suddenly little Davy cried:

"Look! Look at Grandma's face! Isn't it just like the face of the little woman in the story?"

## SCARS OF BATTLE

THE ancient bronze candlestick was set on the table at last, and little Louis could admire it, and stare at it to his heart's content. It was a beautiful Menorah, dented here and there, but finely ornamented and highly polished. On this first Chanukah night one candle was burning in the first branch and another, the "servant," in the tall branch in the center. The pale, yellow lights gleamed and flashed in the shining bronze, which seemed to smile and wink and laugh at Louis. The candles began to burn low, the flickering lights rose and fell, the bronze smiled more broadly and genially. As Louis continued to stare, the ancient Menorah began to speak.

"A merry holiday!" the Menorah smiled. "You and I are going to be great friends, for I see you like me, and I like all those who like me."

Louis was not the least bit startled

at hearing the Menorah talk. He only wondered whence the voice came. He decided finally that it came from the central branch. He returned the smile and waited for his friend to continue.

"Well, I am glad to have somebody to talk to," the Menorah went on. "There are so many things I'd like to tell and it's so hard to keep them all locked up in your socket. Yes, I've had a long and stormy life. But, thank God, I have a strong constitution and have lived through it all. I haven't come out uninjured, oh, no! But I sometimes wonder how I managed to survive at all. I notice you seem to be especially curious about the deep dent on my base and the one on my central branch. Well, my dear little friend, it's late and you are very sleepy, but, if you are willing, I'll tell you the story of those two dents."

Louis nodded, and, with his head resting on his arms, he prepared to listen.

"Of course," began the Menorah, "the story of those two dents is only an incident in my long, adventurous career. Some other time. perhaps, I'll tell you

the story of my life from the day I was born. Just now, I must begin by telling you that not so many years ago I belonged to the house of a rather poor man who lived in a small town in Europe. He was a good and pious Jew, and valued me very highly, because, you see, he had inherited me from his father. I was very well treated, was always kept brightly polished, and during Chanukah week I was the lord of the house, so to speak. My dearest hope was that I should pass from father to son, and thus be permitted to live out my life in this good man's family.

"But fate decreed otherwise. One night the good man came home from the synagogue and brought the terrible news that a great war had broken out and that the enemy was expected before long to invade our land. For weeks we lived in gloom and fear. I was forgotten and neglected, my brightness became tarnished, and I was dull and miserable.

"One night—it was the night before Chanukah, too—the good man came home breathlessly, and ordered every one in the

house to get ready and flee. The enemy, he declared, was at hand, and would bombard the town that very night.

"The women wept, the men ran about like mad. They bundled together some food and blankets and in less than an hour the house was deserted. Me they forgot completely. I cried to them and told them they would need me the very next night, but, I suppose, they did not hear me. Why is it, I wonder, there are so few people able to hear me? It seems to me I talk plainly enough if only people would care to listen.

"Well, imagine my feelings as I stood there all alone in that silent, deserted house in a silent, deserted town. I was so oppressed by the stillness that when, later in the night, I heard a distant rumbling, I almost welcomed it. But soon that sound grew louder, terribly loud, and I knew that the town was being bombarded. I began to hear the noise of falling walls. Finally I heard a tremendous crash above me, and the next instant I lay on the floor, buried in a mass of wood, stone and plaster.

"This time I thought my end was surely come. But, do you know, I have come to believe it is really impossible for me to die? I have heard many wise men say: 'The Menorah is like the people whose life it lights up. It may suffer hardship and misfortune, but it can never die.' And, judging by the things I have gone through, I guess they must be right.

"Well, I must have lain in the heap of masonry all that night and all next day. It was only on the following evening that the cannonading stopped. Then I thought I heard the tramp of many marching feet through the town, and before long I heard a voice at the threshold of my house.

"'Right here, Jacob,' the voice said. 'We can pass the night in this house. All we'll have to do will be to remove that heap of rubbish in the corner.'

"'All right, Morris,' came the answer. 'Let us set to work and get as much sleep as we can. To-morrow we must be on the march again, you know.'

"I felt two pairs of strong hands flinging away the weight that oppressed me. Suddenly one pair stopped.

"'See what we have here, Jacob,' I heard. 'A Menorah, as I live!'

"'And this is the first night of Chanukah, too!' exclaimed Jacob.

"'My God! to think that we have helped destroy a Jewish home, and are now going to occupy it!'

"There was a painful pause.

"'Jacob,' said Morris at last, 'why shouldn't we celebrate Chanukah here? I could easily get some candles from the quartermaster and we could use this Menorah.'

"Well, those two soldiers straightened me out and polished me up, and in less than five minutes I was again standing, even as I stand now, without, of course, these two dents that you are still so curious about, but with two candles burning in honor of the first Chanukah night. Again I was lording it in the house, but this time, woe is me, I was lording it over a mass of ruins.

"In spite of their fatigue, the two soldiers did not go to sleep at once. They sat and talked for a long time. They were very sad. They talked about the

war, of course, and about the terrible plight of the Jewish people. I tried to cheer them up, and it seemed to me that when they looked at me they were a little comforted.

"By the time they went to sleep they had decided to take me along with them, and to light the candles every night of the Chanukah week, if they should find it at all possible. But since they found me too big for one of them to carry in his uniform, they unscrewed me, and each one put away about half of me in his inside pocket. Of course, it was not pleasant to be broken up in this way. While they unscrewed me, one of the soldiers said:

"'Even the Menorah, poor thing, must be torn apart just like our People.'

"The next day both halves of me were on the march, my two bearers marching side by side. About noon the order was given to halt and dig in. In another hour we were all hidden in trenches. Then another great bombardment began, and after that the order came to attack something straight ahead. The soldiers leaped

out of the trenches, bayonets fixed in their rifles. They ran forward. I heard the queer screeching of bullets all around me. Suddenly both my soldiers who had been running side by side stopped, and both fell to the ground. The same instant I felt a sharp swift shock in both halves of me. The soldiers put their hands to their breasts and I could feel their fingers fumbling about me. Then they took me out and each one saw a deep dent in the half of me that he held.

"'My God!' they exclaimed together almost in the same breath. 'Look! The Menorah has saved my life!'

"How proud and happy I felt! What cared I for the two notches in my body if only my two good and brave soldiers were safe!

"That night they united me again and set three candles in my branches. It turned out so that they were able to celebrate every night of the week. I remained in their possession for quite some time until they were able to return me at last to my previous owner.

"But how they were able to do this, and how my previous owner brought me with him to this country is another story. I notice you are very sleepy, and since I have already told you the story of the two dents, I shall not tell you any more now. But before you fall asleep altogether, tell me: Do you think I am any the less beautiful for the two dents those bullets made in my body?"

# THE SABBATH GUEST

REB Sender, the merchant, was the richest and most important man in the town of Zolotka. He lived in the finest house on the finest street, the clothes he wore seemed to be always new, and his face bore a proud and commanding expression. In the synagogue he sat right next to the Rabbi, and after services, if there happened to be a poor stranger in the House of Worship, the much envied honor of entertaining him for the Sabbath would be sure to fall to Reb Sender.

A happy man was Reb Sender the merchant. He believed that nothing he desired could ever fail to come to pass. He had triumphed over all his enemies, and all men, although they did not love him, were anxious to be his friends. They smiled to him and flattered him and Reb Sender asked for nothing more.

Now, at the other end of the town

there lived a very humble and poor old man called Isaac the shoemaker. He earned enough by his cobbling for himself and his old wife, and there was nothing more in the world that he desired. And although his seat in the synagogue was right near the door, he was one of the very few who never flattered Reb Sender the merchant. The rich man hated him, but considered him too low to appear to notice him.

Was there really nothing more that Isaac the shoemaker desired? Alas, Isaac the shoemaker did have one great wish, one hope that he nourished in his soul. Isaac felt that his years were nearing their fullness, and yet throughout his life he had never been able to obey the divine law of hospitality: he had never had the honor of entertaining at his board some poor guest over the Sabbath. For how could he ever induce one of these much-desired poor-guests to come and eat at his table, when he had for competitors men like Reb Sender the merchant? The poor-guests, of course, preferred the tables of the rich.

Isaac the shoemaker continued to hope that this only wish of his would some day be realized. He confided his hope to some of his neighbors, but they laughed at him.

"Old Isaac has rich man's taste and poor man's trousers," they said.

## II

Something out of the ordinary seems to have come over the synagogue of Zolotka. It is Friday night and the place is full of the Sabbath holiness. But is it the usual Sabbath that has brought in this unusual hush, this feeling of awe which stirs in every heart and may be read on every face? Why, even the face of Reb Sender the merchant is without its usual haughty expression, while that of Isaac the shoemaker seems to be transfigured with a strange ecstasy.

The synagogue is as though filled with the divine presence. And yet, only the usual worshippers are there, with the exception of a stranger in shabby clothes wearing a large cap which almost covers his face, and standing near the door not

far from Isaac the shoemaker—evidently a poor-guest.

The services seem to have taken longer than usual, but now they are over. There is a note of sincerity and real friendliness in the Sabbath greetings. Everybody feels happy. Everybody would like to invite the stranger to be his guest for the Sabbath. Reb Sender is especially anxious to have him and feels sure of him already.

"You will be kind enough to come with me for the Sabbath," says Reb Sender to the stranger.

The latter raises his head, and his cap falls back revealing his countenance. A youthful black-bearded face looks out upon the men of Zolotka. And the eyes express so much tranquillity and majesty that Reb Sender and the others can scarcely hold up their own eyes under his gaze.

"And what have you to offer me in your home?" asked the stranger.

"Offer you?" repeated Reb Sender, smiling uneasily. Then his pride was

pricked. "What a strange question for a poor-guest to ask!" he declared.

"What a strange thing for you to invite me when all you have to offer me is bread and meat!" retorted the other.

Reb Sender was puzzled.

"And that is not enough for you?" he asked.

"No", answered the stranger. "That is not enough for me."

"He must be out of his senses to talk like that," thought Reb Sender, and he answered in a tone of light mockery: "I am sorry, but I am afraid you will not suit your taste in this town."

"That remains to be seen," said the stranger. Then turning to the others, he asked:

"Is there no one else here who would invite a poor-guest for the Sabbath?"

But the others, puzzled by the strange conduct of the poor-guest, and afraid, moreover, to enter into competition with Reb Sender the merchant, remained silent.

But suddenly there stepped forth old Isaac the shoemaker. He was never

able to account for the boldness that urged him to speak.

"I invite you," he said, "come with me."

The crowd was amused but silent. "Isaac, too," they thought, "must have gone out of his mind."

But the stranger stepped forth and took Isaac by the hand.

"Come," said he quietly, "let us go."

And together they left the synagogue.

A feeling of disquiet fell upon those who stayed behind. Reb Sender tried to shake it off.

"The shoemaker will certainly suit his taste," said he.

But strange to relate, the others, who usually fawned on him, just looked at one another with an expression as of fear in their faces.

## III

Reb Sender the merchant sat down to his table that night, but found it impossible to put his red wine to his lips or touch a morsel of his white bread or tender meat. The calm, majestic face

of the black-bearded stranger refused to leave his mind for a moment. Reb Sender rose from his table and went out, hoping to find peace in the solitude of the night.

The stars hung low in the sky and never had they appeared to him so big. And each one of them pierced into his soul like the eyes of the poor-guest.

Reb Sender walked straight on, and before he knew it he found himself in the poor section of the town. Rarely did he visit that section. Then why did he go there now? He asked himself that question, but was unable to answer it.

Then, suddenly, the answer flashed in on his mind.

"Why, of course," said he to himself, "I am going to Isaac the shoemaker," just as though that had been his object from the moment he left his home.

He came to a crooked street with scattered tumble-down houses. Behind one of these, in a straw-thatched hut, he knew that Isaac had his home. He turned the dark corner of the house and

stopped before Isaac's hut in amazement.

Through the only window of Isaac's dwelling a wonderfully brilliant light issued and illumined all the surrounding spaces. Inside the hut, on a shelf, he could see the two Sabbath candles, but the light they shed was as brilliant as if it came from a hundred lamps.

"How marvellous!" thought Reb Sender. "And yet people don't seem to have noticed the light. Is it possible they don't see it?"

Stealthily he approached the window and looked in.

Could this be the home of Isaac the shoemaker? How strange! How beautiful! The cloth that covered the table was spotlessly white, the dishes—knives, forks, and spoons—shone and flashed like the purest silver; and the wine in the large crystal bottle sparkled like a heap of liquid rubies. On the table were foods of all sorts, white bread, fish, meat, steaming soup, and all kinds of delicacies.

At the head of the table sat the stranger of the synagogue, the "poor-guest," and opposite him sat old Isaac and his wife.

The face of the stranger shone like the sun of the heavens so that Reb Sender had to turn away his eyes from that radiance. And the faces of Isaac and his wife reflected the glory of the Presence.

Afraid of being discovered, Reb Sender quietly hastened away. But he had seen enough. And the vision had passed over him like a cleansing wave. As he hastened to his home, the low-hanging stars, like the eyes of the "poor-guest," continued to look down on him, but now they seemed to look with cheer and pity. For the first time that he could remember, tears came to his eyes and fell down on the street of the poor. Reb Sender the merchant understood at last.

Next morning, when all the people were gathered in the synagogue, Reb Sender refused to take his old place of honor at the East Wall, but stayed near the door by the side of Isaac the shoemaker, and prayed with him together.

# THE SEVEN LITTLE MEN

WHEN the last hues of the sunset had been slowly absorbed by the evening sky, and the twilight air became filled with the rhythmic chant of the crickets, my grandfather loved to tell us his marvellous stories. The old man's eyes would gaze tenderly and far away, full of blissful wonder and inspiration. Then, as the outlines of houses, barns, and trees vanished in the deepening dusk, new worlds would slowly light up before us, worlds called into being by the luminous fancy of the old man.

If I could only repeat my grandfather's stories in his own words! Then, I am sure, people would think me a wonderful story-teller. I must, however, repeat them as well as I can, especially this one which I heard from his lips when I was only a little child.

I know there are many people who will

doubt the truth of this story, the so-called "practical" and "positive" people, to whom the rainbow, for example, is only the solar spectrum and not God's blessing of peace upon the world. For my part, I do not see how anyone who will take the trouble to look at things a little below the surface, can fail to believe this, or, for that matter, any other of my grandfather's stories.

The hero of this story, to begin with, was just an ordinary youth, the son of a widow whose main support he was. Jonah, for that was his name, had a large number of occupations, most of which were connected with some festival or other. Before Passover, for example, his work was to punch holes in the Matzohs before they were shoved into the oven. For Purim, he sold rattles and carried gifts in napkin-covered plates. On the day before the Feast of Tabernacles, he used to hire old Stepan's horse and wagon and bring into town from the banks of the Pilica, a load of reeds and bushes for the roofs of the booths. And for Shovuos, the festival of sunshine and flowers,

Jonah used to drive into town with a high wagon-load of the finest branches gathered in the neighboring Byelograd forest.

*Greens* for Shovuos! In token of the memory that is ever green of the days when the people lived in the lap of Nature, as it were, in a land of their own, and not in the cramped and grimy cities of the stranger. The twigs they bought from Jonah and hung in their homes were witnesses to their undying love of Nature and of the land from which they had gone astray, and to which they hoped to return.

Now it happened once that Jonah got lost in the Byelograd forest. It was the day before Shovuos, and Jonah had started for his load of branches very early in the morning. The morning was already hot, and as he entered the forest road, he was tempted to go deeper into the forest shade. The foliage on all hands was astir with a thousand forms of life that rustled and buzzed and chirped and trilled. The whole created a harmony which lulled and intoxicated the senses. Jonah, who was somewhat given to day-dream-

ing, stretched out in the bottom of the cart, and gave the horse free rein. His eyes became fixed on the brilliant blue which shimmered through the crests of the oaks and birches. Jonah was as though entranced in a delicious torpor.

The horse in the meantime had come first to one cross-road and then to another, and had chosen his road without waiting for any suggestion from Jonah. When the latter finally roused himself, he saw by the sun that it was past noon, so he set to work at once and heaped his wagon high with the handsomest branches he could find.

"After all," he reflected, as he munched his bread and cheese, after his labors, "it's not such a bad thing that Jews must have greens for Shovuos. It gives a fellow a chance to make some money, and it also gives him a chance to spend a day in the woods. I could live here all my life!" he exclaimed as he stretched out luxuriously under a great tree.

The horse nodded as if in response, as he slowly and philosophically munched his oats.

'Way up in the blue little fleecy clouds swam dreamily, and to Jonah they seemed like a band of little men with long white beards come from the seventh Heaven to inspect the silly Earth. The topmost twigs of the trees swayed and rustled very gently and their murmur barely reached his ears.

Suddenly he heard the oak under which he lay say to the neighboring birch: "There they are again, the seven little men. I suppose they are again trying to show the Jews the way out of the forest."

"They make me tired!" replied the birch peevishly. "As if it's possible for the Jews ever to find a way out. Look at this one, at your toes, for example. He comes here and takes our branches as if he owned them. They are a grasping lot, these Jews!"

"Save your temper, neighbor," replied the oak. "We can easily spare what he took. And believe me, the seven little men will yet show him the way out."

The birch was going to say something, but just then Jonah sprang up and rubbed

his eyes. Realizing that it was late, he urged on his horse and soon came to the first cross-road. He steered into one of the roads and followed it for a long time. Then he stopped. He became aware that he must have taken the wrong road. He turned about, and after reaching the same turning point, he now took the other fork. He followed this until it brought him to another cross-road. Jonah stopped in great perplexity.

The blue that shone through the tree-tops was turning deeper, and the forest was becoming darker. The forest life seemed to have retired to rest, and a heavy stillness made itself felt, which seemed to be only deepened by the faint and distant rustling of the tree-tops.

Which road should he take? Jonah suddenly remembered what a very old man had once told him. This old man had said that if a man is lost in a forest, let him choose a road and follow it without turning to right or left. He will thus be much more likely to find his way out than if he tried first one road and then another.

Jonah steered his horse into one of the roads and drove on. To his right the sun, a great circle of fire, was sinking and bathing the forest in a flood of magic gold. But the gold began to tarnish. It became darker and darker until it became a deep blue. Then, gradually, all became black, and even though a few stars began to twinkle through the leaves, Jonah could barely see the road ahead.

"I may as well stop," he reflected. "The horse's knees are breaking, and I'll never find my way out in the dark. Luckily, it's a warm night."

He steered off the road and stopped at the edge of what appeared to be a little clearing. Then he unharnessed the horse, tied him to a tree and gave him the oats.

"Here, you're all right," he said, "You don't have to worry about breaking the holiday. Eat and go to sleep. It's easy enough to be a horse, or a goy, but to be a Jew, eh! I wonder what mother and the Rav will say when I drive into town to-morrow, on Shovuos."

"But, am I to blame?" he continued.

THERE, AROUND A LARGE STONE, SAT THE SEVEN LITTLE MEN.

"I got lost in the forest. It's true, I should not have let the horse go so far, and I should not have stopped to look at the little men in the sky. A Jew in a strange forest has no business to fall asleep. But what can I do now? It's a dark night and I may as well pass it here."

With these thoughts Jonah climbed to the top of the wagon, arranged a number of the branches and settled himself comfortably to pass the night. In a few minutes he was fast asleep.

All at once he had a strangely caressing sensation on his eye-lids. It was as though his mother were tenderly passing her fingers across them. He raised them and sat up where he lay. A beautiful white light streamed down on the forest. It was a strong, yet sweet and mellow light. Directly over the clearing the full moon hung in the sky like a giant lamp.

The forest beneath that light had a weird and unreal appearance. It was in the grip of a sort of joyful hush, which seemed to be on the point of breaking

into a great shout, but was prevented by some mysterious spell.

But suddenly the spell was broken. Jonah looked down into the clearing, and could scarcely believe his eyes. There, in the middle of the clearing around a large stone, sat the seven little men from the sky, all dressed in white, their long white beards trailing on the ground. They were engaged in chanting aloud the *Tikkun*, the special passages from the Bible compiled for the first night of Shovuos.

"Brothers," said one of them suddenly, "The night is almost like the day. The owls and the bats hide in their lairs. What of the stray one? Is he still asleep?"

"He is beginning to wake," replied another, "but he does not know the way out."

"What a huge joke!" laughed a third, "to be right near the exit and to fall asleep, thinking he is lost!"

"He needs the light of day to find the way out, but by day he dreams too much," took up the fourth.

"And by night he sees no visions!" came from the fifth.

"The day's weary wandering brings him heavy sleep," declared the sixth sadly.

"He follows too many different roads. He should hold to the road he first chose, and not allow himself to be led into strange paths," said the seventh.

"Brothers!" took up the first again, "The night is full of meaning, and the lost sleeper is troubled with a vision at last. Soon the first rays of dawn will throw a gray pallor on the moon. The new morning will gild the earth and the stray one will find his road. Come, brothers, we have finished. It is time for us to go!"

Then Jonah saw seven little pillars of vapor rise from the clearing and float up into the sky. As they rose, the sun shot out its first rays, and the moon waned. High up in the pale blue, Jonah saw seven little fleecy clouds rise higher and higher till they vanished completely into the heavens.

Jonah quickly harnessed his horse and drove on. From all sides came the joy-

ful morning hymn of the birds. The leaves extended their dewy surface to receive the kisses of the sun's rays.

In a few minutes Jonah found himself on the broad road leading to the town. As he entered, the people were on their way to the Synagogue for the morning service. He was quickly surrounded, and he began to tell his story. Before he got very far the gray-bearded Rav made his appearance and stopped to listen.

"Seven is always a fib," exclaimed someone in the crowd when Jonah had finished his story.

But here the old Rav interposed and rebuked the scoffer.

"My son," said he to Jonah, "Let Stepan, who is here, take his horse and wagon, and do you come to the Synagogue and thank God for the vision He has sent you; for there is more truth in it than you yourself are aware of."

# ROAMERS IN THE NIGHT

MY GRANDMOTHER herself, a woman famed for her piety and truthfulness, told me the following story. It befell a certain boy named Israel, who lived in the same town in Russia as she herself when she was still a little girl.

Now, all those who know me will testify that I am not one of those people who are eager to believe all they hear. And yet I have never been able to doubt the real truth of this story. In the first place, my grandmother herself told it to me. In the second place, the truth in it is so clear that all who look for it are bound to find it. But here is the story, and judge for yourself.

## I

Israel was a boy of about thirteen, who lived in a poor town in Russia situated near the famous Byelograd Forest. In

the *cheder*, ruled by the morose Reb Nochum, he was the quietest and most studious; at home his pious parents looked forward confidently to the not distant day when their son would surely become a Rabbi. Israel studied the Talmud diligently, and many good housewives declared that he could already render decisions in matters of Talmudic law. But better even than the law, Israel loved the Haggadah, those beautiful tales that stirred his blood and his fancy.

But passing, as he did, most of his life within the walls of the dingy *cheder*, the great open world was almost unknown to him. So much so, in fact, that not once had he walked in the great Byelograd Forest situated so near his town, although he loved to listen to the marvellous tales people told of that Forest, of the animals which roamed in its depths, of the men who were lost in it, of the spirits that haunted it.

But one day in the year, Lag B'Omer, the entire *cheder*, led by the Rebbi, used to forsake the cramped cheder-room and repair to the fields outside the town near

the forest, in memory of the days when their ancestors were free men and possessed fields of their own. And on the Lag B'Omer when this story begins, the boys had frolicked and played with their toy bows and arrows for the greater part of the afternoon, and, tired and happy, had finally sat down on the grass to partake of the feast to which each one had contributed his share. After full justice had been done to all those good things, the Rebbi, stretched out on the grass like one of the boys, began to recount a story of former days, the story of the great and mighty hero Bar Kochba, who had fought for the freedom of his land, and of the sweet and wise Rabbi Akiba, who had followed the warrior and strengthened his heart.

The day had been brilliant with warm sunshine, and now the deep sky, with the sun already hidden behind the trees of the great forest, was shedding its peacefulness on the earth. Israel, seated on the outside of the circle of listeners, marvelled at the change in the face of Reb Nochum as he told the story. That usu-

ally care-worn, morose face seemed to have become younger, and took on an unusual freshness and a calm dignity. But soon, as Israel listened, he became unaware of all things except of what he heard. And, somehow, the feeling of the deep mysterious forest, and the deepening twilight mingled with the tale of those brave days of old.

Reb Nochum was nearing the end of his narrative, when Israel suddenly felt impelled to rise and walk toward the forest. In his quiet way, he passed unnoticed into the maze of motionless trees, and it was only when his mates were approaching the town on their way home, that they became aware that Israel was not among them.

## II

Through the interlacing branches of the forest the sky was almost invisible. For some time Israel walked about in the gloom as though in a trance. Then he suddenly felt that he was a tiny pigmy and had become entangled among the legs of great giants. He tried to free himself,

"HAIL, BAR KOCHBA! WARRIOR OF ISRAEL!"
HE CRIED.

but the legs were so numerous and so close together, that it seemed to him that he was becoming more and more entangled among them. He reached one, where a thick mass of roots that looked like a great foot lay flat on the ground. He turned away, zigzagged about among the giant's legs, and before long found himself before the same massive foot. Then the truth flashed in on his mind. He was lost in the Byelograd Forest!

In the meantime the sun had gone down, and, through an occasional rift in the branches, Israel could see a star or two tremble overhead. A great fear descended upon him and he stood still in the midst of the forest. The mighty legs seemed to be drawing together in the darkness in order to crush him. But just then he bethought himself of a certain prayer which he repeated every night, and after having uttered it, he felt his fears depart. In truth, he felt strangely unafraid, and continued to grope his way among the trees.

How long he went on in this manner it would be difficult to say, but at length he

came to a tiny clearing, and stopped to look around. The air was perfectly motionless, and the only sound audible was the distant hooting of some lonely owl.

Suddenly Israel heard the sound of foot-steps and stirring foliage from the opposite side of the clearing; and then a bent human figure appeared in the open space. Just then, the moon full and radiant, rose over the trees and illumined the newcomer. He was dressed in a long flowing cloak, and rested on a heavy stick. His face was bearded and its expression was sweet and sad and mild.

"Peace be unto you, Israel," said the old man.

"Unto you be peace," replied the lad. "And who are you?"

"Akiba ben Joseph," was the reply.

"The great Rabbi Akiba!" Israel cried in wonder.

"Ay, Israel; Akiba, who was once great. How long have you been wandering in this forest?"

"I cannot say," replied Israel. "It seems to me I've been wandering for a very long time."

"Tell me," the old man continued, "have you not met in this forest the great Bar-Kochba?"

"Bar-Kochba!" repeated Israel, "Why, I thought you were his companion!"

"Yes," was the sad reply, "but we became separated, and ever since that day I have been looking for him. When I find him, then shall the great thing come to pass."

"What great thing?" Israel inquired.

"The Redemption of the People."

Just then from some distant part of the forest the dismal hooting of the owl rang in the ears of Israel. "Hoot-Hoot! Not-Yet!" it sounded in the ears of Israel.

"The voice of the wise who love the dark," Akiba smiled sadly, and disappeared into the forest.

A fierce anger against that hooting owl came over Israel. If he only had some death-dealing missile to shoot in its direction! But all he had was the toy bow and arrow with which he had played in the afternoon.

But just then he heard a tremendous crashing from the opposite side of the

clearing, and the next instant there leaped into the open space the figure of a man. He was a tall magnificent warrior, a shining shield on his left arm, a large bow slung over his left shoulder, and a huge spear in his right hand. The armor on his chest glistened like the sunlight. The powerful features of his face bore a stern but sad expression.

At once Israel knew who it was.

"Hail, Bar Kochba! Warrior of Israel!" he cried.

"Hail, Israel!" the deep voice echoed through the forest. "And have you met Akiba ben Joseph in your wandering through this forest?"

"He has just been here and disappeared in that direction! Haste and you will overtake him!" cried Israel.

Suddenly the moon became obscured by a pair of broad wings, and a great owl flew overhead hooting. "Hoot-Hoot! Not Yet!" came its weird mocking sound.

Then the great warrior swiftly dropped his shield and spear. He snatched his bow from his shoulder, fitted a bright arrow and aimed at the jeering bird of

darkness. Swift flew the arrow and with a final shrieking hoot, the bird beat its wings convulsively and dropped to the ground. Then the warrior took up his weapons and hastened in the direction that Israel had pointed out to overtake Akiba ben Joseph.

And at the same time the moon began to wane and the light of the dawn began to spread in the forest. From various directions there suddenly rose up, sweet and triumphant, the morning song of the lark.

When one of the parties of searchers came upon Israel the next morning, they found him asleep in one of the clearings of the forest. When he awoke he told his discoverers everything he had seen and heard during that night. And when they brought him back to the town in triumph he repeated his story to a large gathering of people.

And my grandmother, then a little girl, was among those who heard it from his own lips.

# THE SEVERED MENORAH

## A GLIMPSE OF THE GREAT TOMORROW

*To David Emmanuel*

TWO brothers in a little Polish town were preparing one day to leave for a large city a long distance away, in order to study in the Talmudic Academy for which the city was famous. The boys were flushed and excited. They ran to and fro and always found something new to pack away in their trunk. Every moment they looked at the clock, haunted by the dread of missing their train. Everything in their future seemed to them joyous and enchanting; the ride in the train through country and towns, the big city of which they had heard such wonderful things, the Academy with its many students and famous teachers, and the holy study itself they loved so well.

Their mother was laying out their meager belongings in the little trunk, and she could not prevent a number of tears from falling into it. True, her sons were

going to make themselves masters of the Holy Law in accordance with the dying wish of her revered husband. But she had heard of the hard life of the poor students among strangers. She knew that her boys would be thrown upon the charity of the householders of the city, that they would have to "eat days," as the expression goes, that is to say, take their meals one day with one family and the next day with another. And she knew also that students sometimes found themselves without "days" and without food.

Before shutting the cover of the little trunk, the good woman bethought herself a moment. Then she opened a tall closet in a corner of the room and from the top shelf she took down a large shining Menorah.

"Come here, David; come here, Emanuel," she called to her sons. "You know this Menorah. It has been an heirloom in our family for generations. You know how I cherish it. It is the only article of value that I possess. But I cherish you more. I therefore place it in your

trunk, and if it should ever happen that you will be in great need, then you may either pawn this Menorah or sell it."

"Never!" exclaimed Emanuel, "That would be a sin. I would rather starve!"

"Let us take it, just the same," said David, "and when we come back, we can show mother it is still with us."

The mother smiled in a way that expressed both her sadness and her pride. She then took up the Menorah and tried to place it into the little trunk, but found that the latter was not wide enough for the broad branches of the candlestick.

This Menorah, made of bronze, had a heavy square base, from which rose a tall square column to the branches which spread upward and outward. The branches ended in square, well-shaped sockets. The object gave an impression of distinction, solidity and simplicity.

In order to pack it away, all that was necessary was to unscrew the base and column from the branches and lay the two parts side by side. David soon ac-

complished this, and the little trunk was shut and locked.

The three then made their way to the railroad station. The siren of the locomotive shrieked above the bustle of the passengers and clatter of the baggage. Mother and sons embraced for the last time, and the train bounded away, bearing the two eager boys toward the big and longed-for city.

## II

The great Hebrew poet Bialik has, in his *Mathmid*, portrayed with stirring vividness and pathos the life of hardship and devotion of the young student who has dedicated himself to the study of the Law. Days without food and nights without repose are demanded by this stern and exacting ideal. Like the pale, flickering, yet everlasting lights of the Chanukah lamps, these young souls burn and struggle, fed by the miraculous fuel of a great devotion.

Of the two brothers, it was the younger, Emanuel, whose sacrificing zeal was the greater. The privations which the two

began to suffer only spurred Emanuel on to greater industry and devotion. His pallor increased, his eyes shone with a profound lustre. A strong and ardent soul was mirrored in the stern brilliance of those dark eyes.

It devolved upon David to look after the subsistence of both. The older brother was of a more positive and practical disposition. There were times, even, when in order to supply the necessaries of life for himself and his brother, he suspended his studies for a while, went out and found work. He was by nature very apt and capable, and managed to solve all their difficulties.

The large bronze Menorah still stood on a shelf in the corner of the ramshackle little synagogue, where they slept and studied in the evening. In those surroundings it looked like some magnificent prince lost in the midst of shabby beggars.

At times the simple and practical mind of David would be assailed with doubts and rebellious thoughts. He began to wonder if the life of constant study and

hardship were the wisest life for him and his brother to lead.

"I don't see, Emanuel," he would sometimes say, "why mother is so eager that we should become great scholars. It seems to me very often our life would be more profitable to her and to ourselves if we went out into the world and worked."

"Profitable? What profit hath man in all the labor wherein he toileth under the sun?" retorted Emanuel, quoting Ecclesiastes.

"No bread, no learning," David quoted in return.

It was hard to find a good counter-quotation to this one on an empty stomach.

"We've been pretty tight these days," continued David, "and I've often thought of our Menorah." He looked up from his folio to the darkened corner, where the massive bronze object flashed back the flickering gleam of their single candle.

"I, too, have been thinking of our Menorah," replied Emanuel, "and it

once suggested to me a rather strange idea."

"What was it, Emanuel the Dreamer?"

"A mere childish comparison. I thought that you and I could be compared to our Menorah, you the strong base and support, and I the thin branches."

"With the lights ever burning in them," added David.

"And each part useless without the other," Emanuel continued.

"I guess we won't part with our Menorah yet," declared David after a pause. "I'll go out to-morrow and see what I can find."

"No, we must not part with it," replied Emanuel. "It is a holy thing and the token of a great miracle. Who knows if it won't accomplish a miracle for us some day."

"Emanuel the Dreamer," said David again, smiling and laying his broad hand on his brother's shoulder.

And then the two students bent again to their large folios, which the single flickering candle-light covered with trembling shadows.

## III

A mighty tree—a cedar of Lebanon—is the Jewish People, but uprooted and transplanted to a strange and jejune soil. Like two tiny leaves on this tree were David and Emanuel, two leaves on one twig that shook and trembled in the winds that blew.

But a greater tempest was to burst upon it, a ravaging gale that seized upon all the nations of the world and struck with fiercest violence the People that had been uprooted and transplanted. The roots of a people hold firm only when they are imbedded in its own soil.

Even to the dingy retreat of the two students came the mutterings of the tempest. A profound uneasiness descended on the town, and, like a thick autumnal fog, it penetrated everywhere. Reports and rumors arose like fever-bringing miasmas. But one became ever more frequent and persistent: "The enemy is coming.—He is approaching ever nearer.—Soon he will be here!"

"Let us flee," men said.

And many inhabitants fled. They became fewer in the town in proportion as the soldiers who arrived became more numerous. Only the very poor, who could obtain no means of conveyance, had to remain.

But one evening the thunder of cannon rumbled through the air, bringing their message of destruction and death.

David and Emanuel were bending over their large folios by the light of their candle when the sound reached their ears. Simultaneously a confused noise of running and shouting arose in the streets. They looked out and saw the inhabitants feverishly piling their belongings on vehicles of all sorts, and making their way as quickly as they could through the streets away from the town. The carts clattered loudly on the badly paved roads, the men shouted and whipped the scraggy beasts, children cried, women wailed, and people ran and shouted in a din of panic and confusion.

"Time for us to move," said David.

"But whither?" asked Emanuel.

"Out of the town, away from the shoot-

ing. We may perhaps find room in one of the wagons."

They returned to their corner, closed and put away their volumes and were about to snuff their candle, when the gleam of the Menorah caught Emanuel's eye.

"Do we leave it?" he asked his brother.

David thought a moment.

"No," he said. "We can take it along. He took down the object. "It is big and quite heavy," he remarked.

"Separate the base from the branches," said Emanuel, "Just as we did when mother gave it to us."

In a few moments the two parts were unscrewed by David's dexterous fingers.

"Let me take the branches," said Emanuel. "And do you take the base: each one his own part."

"Ah! brother," observed David, "you still have your fancies, even when we flee for our lives."

They joined the hurrying procession outside, keeping close to each other, and each one carrying his part of the only thing in the world they possessed.

A dark night wrapped about the darkened city. Carts and wagons laden with household goods and people passed them on the road like huge formless shadows. They reached the high-road outside the city, and there the number of vehicles was increased by those that came from neighboring villages and towns.

David hailed one of those moving shadows and asked for conveyance for himself and his brother.

"Room for one only," answered a voice from the darkness.

He hailed another and received the same answer.

"Jump up on this one, and I'll take the other," he said to Emanuel.

The carts moved on, overtaking some and being overtaken by others. In a short while the brothers could no longer distinguish each other's shadows. They believed, however, that both their conveyances were going to the same destination.

But after a while a cross-roads was reached, and while one of the carts con-

tinued on the high-road, the other turned to the left and took the side-road.

David and Emanuel were thus separated without even, at the time, being aware of it.

## IV

The two brothers became separate units of different groups of refugees, driven along by forces beyond their control in different directions.

While Emanuel found himself getting farther and farther south and east towards Odessa, David was being carried north towards Archangel. No means of communication, no possibility of reunion.

The days passed, and the weeks and the months, and the years.

Gradually the storm that had seized upon the nations showed signs of abatement. Both victor and vanquished lay exhausted and panting for peace.

And at last peace descended on the earth. Men put away the sword and again took up the ploughshare.

The refugees over the broad and bleak

land of Russia began to return to their homes to build again on their ruins. Many of them, however, sought new homes beyond the seas, and there were others among them who went down to an old Land, not alone to build homes for themselves, but also to rebuild the Home of their People.

The years passed on and on, and yet David and Emanuel could find no trace of each other nor of their mother. The brothers, each in his separate sphere, became absorbed in their separate labors. The immediate demands of life bound them to their daily tasks. The striving for reunion gradually dwindled into a mere hope, but this hope they never surrendered.

And in earnest of this hope each brother kept and cherished his part of the Menorah, which had been severed and parted like themselves.

* * *

Back to the Ancient Land swarmed the sons and daughters of the Ancient People to rebuild their Home and fulfil

their age-long hope and struggle. Again the mighty cedar struck root in its own soil.

From the farthest corners of the earth, especially from America, flowed a stream of wealth for the pioneers and builders. Wherever the people were scattered they gave of their strength for the mighty task. They served as base and support to those who bore the light of the great ideal.

In the Ancient Land the waste places were turned into gardens, hamlets became towns and towns became cities. And over all reigned Beauty that was also Truth and Reverence. Tourists like pious pilgrims came from all parts of the world to feast their eyes and souls.

On a certain day an elderly man of wealthy and distinguished appearance was touring the magnificent city of Jerusalem. He had arrived from America several weeks before, and had already inspected the great port of Jaffa and most of the points of interest in the capital.

Evening was coming on. He entered a synagogue for the evening service. After

the service he continued to stay in the synagogue, admiring the simple and massive architecture.

He looked into one of the alcoves where, at a long table, sat a group of elderly men with large Talmud folios open before them. At the head of the table sat the leader of the group expounding the Law to the rest.

The tourist was about to pass on when his gaze was arrested suddenly by an object which stood in front of the man who sat at the head of the table. The visitor stood still as though petrified. Then he approached the table and examined the object more closely. It consisted of the branches of a large Menorah inserted in a wooden board for support. The sockets contained candles which threw their light on the pages of the man at the head of the table.

The elderly tourist opened the portemanteau he carried, and with trembling hands he took out a bronze object and placed it on the table beside the other. It was the base of a Menorah, and, from the design of both, it was plainly to be

seen that they were the two parts of the same object.

The men at the table had stopped their disputations and were looking curiously at the stranger. The leader of the group rose and the two looked into each other's countenance.

"David!" "Emanuel!" they spoke together. They fell on each other's necks and wept with joy.

The base of the Menorah was again joined to the branches never more to be sundered, even as the two brothers were reunited forever in the Land of their People.

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